Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates
January – March 1997 Number 11

The Eternal Way

YOUR LIBERATION IN THIS INCARNATION

As a kriya yoga initiate, your major purpose during this life cycle should be liberation of consciousness as soon as possible. To be liberated is to be fully awake to Self-knowledge and to be free from delusions, illusions, and the influences of mental conditionings and external circumstances. Is this *your* major purpose? If it is not, what is your major purpose—and why?

Light Through the Ages

THE ESSENCE OF THE SHANDILYA UPANISHAD

A continuing examination of a rare yoga text written centuries ago by an ancestor of Lahiri Mahasaya.

Abiding in the Sanctuary of the Soul

GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AND SUCCESSFULLY FACILITATING GROUP MEDITATION PRACTICE

There is no more useful service to perform than to provide devotees of God an opportunity to meditate together. Use these procedures to share the light of truth with others.

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

When liberated while embodied, one perceives the universe as existing in God, and God in [pervading] and [manifesting] as the universe.
– Yoga Sutras 4:37 –

Prelude

A few months ago in *Truth Journal*, I wrote of my hope of having at least 1,000 CSA affiliated meditation groups in the world by the beginning of the next century, four years from now. Ten readers requested literature we offered which concisely explained how to establish a meditation group. A more complete explanation is provided in this issue of *Radiance*. I hope that many of you will be inspired to make regular group meditation sessions available for devotees of God in your local community. Read the procedure for doing this, then let me know of your intention to follow through in a constructive way. I will work with you and support your endeavors. If it is not convenient for you to establish a meditation group, read the procedure so you will know our focus and be better able to support a meditation group activity if one is established in your community.

In this issue we are nearing the end of my commentary on the Shandilya Upanishad, written centuries ago by one of Lahiri Mahasaya's ancestors. When it is concluded in the spring issue, I will begin a commentary on another basic yoga text.

Endless blessings,

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Your Liberation in this Incarnation

If you are sincerely dedicated to spiritual growth, the liberation of your consciousness should be first on your list of priorities in this incarnation. Liberation should be accomplished as soon as possible so you can be relieved of the problems the nonliberated state can cause, and live out your soul destiny in space-time in the light that flawless understanding provides.

What does it mean to be liberated? It means that all delusions (erroneous beliefs) have been banished by knowledge, and illusions (misperceptions) no longer cloud our awareness.

When, as a young teenager attending the fundamentalist church near my family home I first heard about the possibility of obtaining salvation, I knew then that mere belief in a system of theology was not sufficient to guarantee that ideal state. When I read yoga philosophy, I began to understand what soul liberation is and how it can be experienced. When I met Paramahansa Yogananda, he explained the liberation process to me and demonstrated in his life how a liberated person thinks and acts.

There are many saintly souls with almost clear understanding, who are aware of the presence and support of God in their lives, yet are not liberated. They are either content with their present level of soul unfoldment or they do not know how to awaken to complete illumination of consciousness. When our consciousness is completely illumined, our mind is also illumined and purified with our soul radiance. So long as there is restless desire to experience "mystical states" of consciousness, so long as delusions persist and illusions obscure our perception of reality, (life processes as-they-are from the field of God to the sphere of physical manifestation), and so long as habits, mental and emotional conditionings, genetic characteristics, and even the three instrumental qualities of nature (*gunas*) in any way determine our thoughts and actions, there is yet a need to wisely persist with diligence and faith on the spiritual awakening path.

Some devotees do not aspire to liberation or help themselves to it because they erroneously believe their spiritual progress to be entirely a matter of God's will or inclination. "Whatever God wills for me," they say, "I will cheerfully accept." They may not know that to surrender to God means to renounce self-conscious states in favor of superconscious states, cosmic consciousness, and God knowledge and awareness. We cannot surrender to the process of awakening *in* God by clinging to personal and often self-defeating opinions, viewpoints, relationships, and behaviors.

Paramahansaji often extolled disciples and people who came to hear him speak at public meetings, "Do not go just part of the way to the spiritual goal, or go almost there only to give up and turn back. Go all the way, until you are awake in God! With your last breath, if the need is still present, pray, 'God I want only to merge in you!' If you will wholeheartedly persist, you will be liberated in this lifetime. This, I can promise you."

It is not only devotees in secular society who may fall short of the aim of enlightenment; many ministers, priests, and yoga teachers also fail to awaken completely in God. Their aspiration may dry up. They may allow themselves to become too involved in relationships and activities which distract them from their goal and pull them into involvement with self-conscious states of awareness. They may erroneously think they have attained a clear state of consciousness and no longer need to continue introspective self-analysis, philosophical reflection, and regular, deep meditation practice. They may think that a vocation of service to others is sufficient to keep them progressing on the awakening path, or that such service will result in their being rewarded for it when they make their transition from the physical realm. They may not know that inertia and delusion are the two major obstacles to their spiritual growth to be confronted and transcended.

When all the developments of ignorance are withdrawn, the heart [the real being], now perfectly clear and purified, no longer merely reflects the spiritual light but actively manifests it. Thus being consecrated and anointed [by the Spirit of God], the devotee becomes free.

– Swami Sri Yukteswar –

The Essence of the Shandilya Upanishad

This ancient Upanishad belongs to the category of Yoga Upanishads which contain esoteric information. For the beginning of this series, refer to issue number 9 of Radiance, page 7.

Artharvan continues to instruct Shandilya:

By the mastery of breath by consistent practice of *pranayama* which does not cause fatigue, and by meditating in a secluded place, the fluctuations of the mind cease. Through right realization of the true nature of the sound at the extreme end of the pronunciation of *Om*, and when dreamless sleep is rightly cognized, the fluctuations of *prana* cease. When the uvula is closed by the tongue and when the life force goes upward, then the fluctuations of *prana* cease. When consciousness is merged with life force that flows to the spiritual eye, then the fluctuations of *prana* cease. When the spiritual eye becomes calm and clear so that the meditator can see into inner space, then the fluctuations of *prana* cease. When thoughts and mental processes are dissolved into the spiritual eye, then the fluctuations of *prana* cease. When the knowledge which is beneficial and is untouched by any modifications is discerned as *Om* only and nothing else, then the fluctuations of *prana* cease. By long contemplation on the fine essence of the heart, and by contemplation of the mind devoid of influential tendencies, then fluctuations of *prana* cease. By these methods, and various others one is inspired to use, and by attunement with the consciousness of saints, the fluctuations of *prana* cease.

Commentary:

Here are various practices which can be used to still the random actions of the mind and life forces. Alternate nostril breathing can

be practiced to quiet mental activities and relax the body. The more dynamic practice of *kriya yoga pranayama* definitely stops fluctuations of the mind and vital forces. Note the recommendation to avoid tiredness when practicing and to meditate in a secluded place free of stimulating influences.

Absorption in and contemplation of *Om* is a direct way to transcendence, as is analysis of and insight into the dreamless sleep state. During dreamless sleep, mental processes are very refined and the body's vital forces flow inward. By consciously duplicating the psychophysiological characteristics of dreamless sleep, one can experience absolute, pure awareness.

By keeping attention and vital forces flowing into the spiritual eye when meditating, mental processes are refined and superconscious states are experienced. The "fine essence of the heart" to be contemplated is the true nature of the individualized Self in relationship to egoism (its erroneous sense of independent existence) and its powers of intellectual discernment when in relationship to mind and matter.

When the devotee's thoughts and states of consciousness are attuned to those of the saints past and present of one's enlightenment tradition, the devotee's awareness is lifted out of self-conscious states into superconscious and transcendent states.

Text:

By having opened the door of *kundalini* by the practice of certain procedures, one should intentionally cause the door of liberation to be opened. Closing the door through which one's life forces should go, *kundalini* sleeps coiled like a serpent. The yogi who causes *kundalini* to move [and be freely expressive] is [soon] liberated. When *kundalini* is influential in the neck *chakra* [and higher], it contributes to liberation. In deluded people *kundalini* is influential in the lower regions of the body only. Leaving the two *nadis* [*ida*, the left channel in the spinal pathway, and *pingala*, the right channel], *kundalini's shakti* [vital energy] should move in the *sushumna* [the central pathway in the spine]. That channel is called "the path of

God." To facilitate this, one should practice *pranayama* [as directed by one's *guru*] with firm concentration. One's practice routines should not be confined to the daytime or night only, but should be scheduled to allow the most beneficial results as determined by the meditator's aspiration and commitment to practice.

When one practices *kechari mudra* while sitting in meditation, the life forces which formerly flowed in the left and right channels of the spine are inclined to flow through *sushumna*. You should move the vital force through *sushumna* [by practice of *kriya pranayama*]. That is the location of *kechari mudra*. It is also located in the spiritual eye. [Note: The practice of *kechari mudra* should be learned from one's guru.]

Commentary:

Kechari mudra ("having one's consciousness free in space") is accomplished when awareness is no longer confined to physical or mental processes. The "location" of this state is said to be related to the innermost pathway in the spine and the spiritual eye (including the *crown chakra*). The accomplishment of a physical practice also designated as *kechari mudra*, in which the tongue is placed in the upper palate and uvula for the purpose directing flows of refined life forces to the brain centers should be learned from one's teacher (if the teacher chooses to explain it) and not anyone else or from books.

Text:

Firmly pressing the perineum with the left heel, drawing up the vital force to the neck and head chakras, stretching out the right leg, grasping the foot with both hands, momentarily retain the vital force in the higher centers. By this, *prana* is mastered and death is conquered. Then sit in meditation, contemplating your true Self in your field of awareness. In this way, direct perception [of the truth of your being] is experienced.

Commentary:

Here the *maha mudra* ("great procedure") is explained along with its purported benefits. It should be practiced with the right leg extended, the left leg extended, and both legs extended, for as many times as advised by the teacher or as is comfortable for the practitioner. Following the practice of *maha mudra*, meditative contemplation on Absolute Reality should be practiced.

Text:

That one who retains the life force together with concentrated attention at the spiritual eye even for a duration of forty-eight minutes, destroys all effects of past unwise actions committed during one hundred incarnations.

Commentary:

There really can be no specific time value placed on internalized practice and its results. The above text indicates that when the meditator is established in transcendent realization for a sufficient duration of time, one's awareness may be permanently removed from self-conscious states and from the effects of thoughts or actions in relationship to those states.

Text:

By contemplation of *Om*, all things [about God and processes of cosmic manifestation] are known.

By transcending *dharma* and *adharma*, one knows the past and future.

By contemplation on the sound of creatures, knowledge of the causes of their utterances is obtained.

By contemplating one's *karma* which is yet to be manifested, knowledge of previous incarnations spontaneously unfolds.

By contemplating the mind of others, knowledge of their thoughts

is obtained.

By contemplating strength, one becomes strong.

By contemplation of the sun [and solar system] knowledge of the sun and movements of the planets is obtained.

By contemplation on the true Self, one obtains knowledge of the Spirit of God that nurtures the field of nature.

Commentary:

Some of the *siddhis* ("powers of perfection") also described in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* are mentioned, most of them clearly explained. The *siddhi* of knowing the past and future is acquired when one's awareness is no longer confined to the mechanical performance of right actions (*dharma*) or a need to intentionally avoid their opposites (*adharma*), but is established in Self-knowledge which results in spontaneous, appropriate actions and immediate access to knowledge of past causes and their probable future effects.

Text:

Pratyahara is of five kinds. It is the drawing away of the sense organs to avoid attachments with externals. Learning to see everything that is observed as an expression of Supreme Consciousness is such a practice, as is renunciation of attachments to the results of one's daily actions, withdrawing attention and internalizing it to meditate without distractions, plus other procedures practiced to provide mastery over flows of attention and of the sense organs.

Commentary:

Unless we acquire proficiency in being soul-centered when we are engaged in ordinary activities and relationships, it is unlikely that we will be able to withdraw attention from externals and meditate effectively when we sit to contemplate higher realities. Regular superconscious meditation practice can provide experience of inner poise that enables us to relate to circumstances without becoming

overly involved with them.

Text:

One can then successfully practice the three kinds of *dharana* (concentration): fixing attention on the true Self; contemplation of the inner space of the heart (being); and contemplation of the five varieties of regulating influences in the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether (space with cosmic forces).

Dhyana (meditation) naturally follows and is of two kinds: *saguna* (with the influences of the gunas or qualities of nature being present) and *nirguna* (without such influences). The former is usually practiced with some form or aspect of God as the object of contemplation. The latter is contemplation on the reality of one's Self or the Self as Supreme Consciousness.

Samadhi is the bringing together of awareness of the *jivatman* (individualized Self) and *paramatman* (Supreme Consciousness) without any sense of oneself as the knower, of that which is known as being an object, or of the knowledge experienced. Its characteristics are supreme bliss (unqualified, joyous soul peace) and flawless experience of absolute or pure consciousness.

Commentary:

When *samadhi* (conscious wholeness or oneness) is fully experienced, the meditator's awareness is not clouded or fragmented. There is no longer any sense of distinction between one's true Self and Supreme Consciousness. Knowledge innate to the meditator's consciousness is self-revealed.

– to be continued and concluded in the next issue

SUPPLEMENT

ABIDING IN THE SANCTUARY OF THE SOUL

A HANDBOOK OF PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING AND SUCCESSFULLY FACILITATING GROUP MEDITATION MEETINGS

How to Prepare Yourself, Plan and Publicize Meetings to Attract Sincere Participants, Facilitate Sessions, and Share the Light of Truth in Your Community

"There is an enlivening Power nurturing the universe and we can learn to cooperate with It"

Word Meanings • Teachings and Mission Purpose

abide To wait patiently; persevere; accept, remain in one place or state; to dwell or sojourn.

sanctuary A sacred or holy place; a place of refuge.

soul A unit of God's consciousness endowed with knowledge of God and of cosmic processes, with divine qualities and virtually limitless capacities that can be unfolded and expressed.

handbook A concise manual or reference book providing specific information or instruction about a particular subject.

procedure A way of performing or effecting a process or a chosen course of action to accomplish intended results.

establish To make secure or firm; to introduce and cause to persist; to cause to be recognized and accepted.

successful To have a favorable outcome.

facilitate To make easier.

group An assemblage of persons; individuals considered together because of similar views, intentions, and actions.

meditation The practice of withdrawing attention from externals and turning it inward to restore awareness to wholeness.

meeting The act or process of coming together for a purpose.

Center for Spiritual Awareness teaches that it is possible, by right personal endeavor and God's grace, to have a conscious relationship with the Infinite and fulfill life's purposes in harmony with nature's laws. Our mission purpose is to provide spiritual education, support, and encouragement on the spiritual growth path to responsive truth seekers throughout the world.

Introduction

This handbook of procedure is provided to individuals who are aware of the value of meditation practice because of their own experiences and who want to provide an opportunity for others with similar aspirations to derive the benefits of regular, in-depth meditation practice. The results of doing this are:

- The group leader is empowered with a sense of worthwhile purpose and his or her spiritual growth is nourished because assuming the responsibility for facilitating the project strengthens inner resolve, enlivens and brings forth creative forces, and increases one's faith in God and the supportive actions of the universe.

- Individuals who participate have an opportunity to learn to meditate effectively. They can experience the process with the support of other dedicated meditators and be encouraged on their path of self-discovery and spiritual growth.

- An active meditation group can be a place of light in the community that will benefit everyone regardless of whether or not they are aware of the activity. The clear awareness and soul calm of meditators silently, constructively influences the consciousness of all people in the community and on the planet.

Our outreach, in cooperation with qualified representatives of our work, is focused upon providing opportunities in various communities for interested persons to assemble for meditation practice on a regular schedule. From time to time, public information meetings may also be offered for the purpose of informing interested individuals about the meditation group activity and to distribute literature. The primary emphasis, however, should be on facilitating group meditation sessions.

Meditation group leaders should be dedicated CSA members, well-versed in our philosophical views, attentive to their private spiritual practices, successful in living their lives, and willing and able

to accept and abide by the practical guidelines and recommendations from CSA headquarters in regard to the effective representation of our ideals and purposes.

It is essential that presentations and activities accurately represent our ideals and purposes so that people who are contacted or who attend programs will know exactly what we stand for and the possible benefits available to them. To ensure this, we recommend that courteous, appropriate, personal demeanor be demonstrated by our representatives at all times and that meetings be facilitated in an orderly, intentional manner.

It is not our intention to engage in endeavors to convert others to our views or to encourage activities based on personalities; our purpose is to encourage interested people to learn and practice meditation. As they experience positive personal benefits and spiritual growth spontaneously occurs, their lives will be enriched, their circumstances will improve, and they will naturally be happier, healthier, and more purposeful.

Pray about your decision. Read this handbook carefully to be informed about procedures. Adhere to the guidelines and you will learn by doing. Consider yourself as but an agent through and by which much good can unfold in your life and the lives of others.

> There is a fundamental law [causative influence or determining process] of life. To recognize it we must understand where life comes from and where it is going. We must look beyond our immediate goals to what we want to finally accomplish in our lives—while considering life's ultimate purpose and its highest potential for development.
>
> — *Paramahansa Yogananda*

Establishing and Successfully Facilitating Group Meditation Meetings

Meditation group leaders should be regular in their spiritual practices and live balanced, purposeful lives.

- *Have a Daily Personal Routine* – This will anchor your life in the Infinite. Be attentive to personal hygiene, suitable exercise, nutritious diet, study for self-improvement and philosophical reflection, and regular, deep meditation practice. Read *Truth Journal* and *Studies in Truth* lessons regularly. If you are a kriya initiate, also read *Radiance* magazine. Read *Life Surrendered in God* and *The Eternal Way* to improve your understanding and to deepen your attunement with me and our teaching emphasis.

- *Maintain Mental and Emotional Health* – Be cheerful and optimistic, soul content, patient, kind, compassionate, and helpful. Renounce mental confusion, emotional conflicts, addictive behaviors, and purposeless activities. Be as emotionally mature and responsible as possible. You need not be perfect to facilitate a meditation group; just be the best you can be.

- *Maintain Physical Wellness* – Cultivate an mental image (and inner awareness) of yourself as being radiantly healthy, skillfully functional, and fully open and responsive to allowing spiritual qualities to be expressed through and around you. Do this for yourself and as an example to others.

- *Cultivate a Prosperity Consciousness* – To prosper is "to thrive, flourish, and be successful in worthwhile endeavors." Cultivate an attitude of affluence—of always being in the flow of resources, events, relationships, and circumstances that contribute to your overall well-being and highest good. Your constructive actions produce satisfying results. God's grace is constantly available to you. The universe supports and provides for you when you are in harmony with it and its processes.

- *Demonstrate Appropriate Behaviors* – Our behaviors reflect our

psychological states and our personal understanding of what is of value to us. Cultivate and demonstrate appropriate behaviors. Eliminate inappropriate and self-defeating behaviors. Be good to yourself, kind to others, attend to your personal duties and relationships, and express virtues and noble qualities. Demonstrate thoughtful, good taste in grooming, attire, personal environmental circumstances, conversation, and behavior.

You need not wait until you are spiritually enlightened to facilitate a meditation group. All that is necessary is the willingness to do it and adherence to a few basic guidelines. Paramahansa Yogananda told me, "While you are still learning to swim [growing spiritually], you can help others learn to swim."

Our primary approach to helping is to introduce sincere truth seekers to basic how-to-live principles and to right practice of meditation. For this, provide them an opportunity to meditate on a regular schedule. Avoid endeavors to satisfy emotional or dependent needs of participants. Counseling others about their problems should be avoided. Teaching is not necessary. Provide new people with literature. If they are sincerely interested in learning, they will read the literature and apply what they learn.

As a meditation group leader, your role is to provide the environment in which people can learn to meditate easily and experience the deep calm that results.

To successfully facilitate a meditation group session, you only have to be a meditator and meditate along with the group. You may provide a few inspirational words of encouragement at the beginning and end of the session.

Place: A convenient, quiet location is suitable. It should be easily accessible, have adequate parking, and be free of distractions. This can be your home or apartment, a place provided by someone else, a church meeting room, a public library meeting room, a business office conference room, a modest hotel meeting room, or wherever is most suitable. If you use your residence, invite only people you know well. Do not invite strangers to your home unless regular participants will also be there. If using your residence, make arrangements ahead of time to have one or two regular participants stay until everyone else has departed. Maintain your personal security and

privacy. In some communities, a metaphysical bookstore may have a meeting room to be rented at a modest price. If you do this, make sure the room is clean and quiet, and that the overall environment is uplifting. Avoid places that are used for "new age networking" where diverse teachings and activities are promoted. The location of the meditation sessions should always be supportive of eliciting (bringing out) the noble qualities of participants.

For general meditation group meetings, it is not necessary to display pictures of our guru line. If you do have the pictures displayed, do so on a side table rather than having them as the center of focus. Kriya yoga initiates who assemble for meditation practice may wish to have pictures of the gurus at the front of the room because the pictures are more meaningful to them. Do not have pictures of saints of other traditions in the meditation room. While we honor all enlightened saints and their teachings, we remain attuned to our tradition. This enables us to remain focused on our philosophical emphasis and spiritual practices and helps to avoid conversations and interpersonal involvements which are not consistent with our purpose for meeting together.

Time: Any convenient time. Thursday evenings at 7 or 7:30 p.m. is good. It is between weekends, when many people are ready for a midweek renewal experience. Retired persons may want to meet during a daytime session. A few of our groups meet early Sunday morning, at a private residence or in a meeting room of a church they attend. Choose a time that meets your requirements and best serves the purpose of the group.

Whom to Invite: Anyone sincerely interested in meditating can be invited. Screen individuals to ensure compatibility. Persons who only want to socialize, or who feel a need to talk about their problems or about various metaphysical or religious views, should be excluded unless they can conform to the program.

How to Facilitate the Session: Start on time and conclude on time. Forty minutes to one hour is sufficient. Encourage early arrivals to sit quietly rather than engage in social or philosophical conversation. If appropriate, begin with quiet group chanting of Om (three times) and inward turning. Let meditation proceed in silence.

Conclude at the appointed time with quiet chanting of Om (three times). Let participants depart while they are still immersed in the after-effects calm of meditation. Avoid excessive social interaction before and after the session.

If new participants need instruction in meditation practice, have them arrive a few minutes before starting time and explain the simple relaxation, mantra meditation procedures. Give them my meditation instruction audio cassette ahead of time. When first starting the meetings, show on a television set our *An Introduction to Center for Spiritual Awareness* video. Show my meditation instruction video (available Spring 1997) to new participants, and to regular participants from time to time so they can review their practice.

Schedule: If compatible with your personal schedule, convene the group sessions once a week on an ongoing basis. In many communities, our group leaders find it more effective to announce a series of meetings of 4, 6, or 8 weeks, with another series announced at a later date. Some groups recess during summer months (June until Labor Day in the U.S.) and during major holidays and holiday seasons because, for many people, these are vacation and family times.

If participation is random, if people only attend now and then, do not feel rejected. If no one comes, meditate anyway because that is your commitment. Eventually, devotees of God who are in harmony with our ideals will come forth.

Have a guest book available if people want to be informed of future scheduled sessions and events.

If you are not renting a meeting place, you need not receive donations. If rent must be paid, have a basket on a table near the door and invite donations for this purpose.

This is all you need to do to facilitate a satisfying session. Meet at the appointed time and place, meditate, and conclude the session. Keep the program simple and focused on essentials.

Recommendations: Avoid discussions about your personal life or the personal matters or circumstances of participants.

Avoid extensive philosophical discussions by referring inquirers to our literature. Do not attempt to counsel or advise. Discourage telephone calls for the purpose of social interaction or metaphysical discussion. Live your life with purposeful intention and allow others

the freedom to live their lives. Avoid being persuaded into the role of a teacher, an emotional supporter, or "someone to talk with." *Your primary role is to provide the opportunity for participation in group meditation.*

This program is ideal for new meditators as well as for those who are more experienced. If you know people who are kriya initiates in our tradition and are interested in meditating together, you may choose to meet with them at a time other than during the sessions scheduled for persons who are not yet initiated. Or you may decide to make the sessions available only to kriya initiates. Determine how you want to proceed, then go forward with conscious intention and quiet enthusiasm.

When the meetings are established for three months, let us know if you want to your name and telephone number listed in *Truth Journal* on the directory page where we publish information about our affiliated centers and meditation groups.

Letting the Right People Know: The Principle of Attraction and Ways to Publicize the Programs

The "right people" to inform about the meetings are those who are sincerely interested, readily responsive, and happy when they have an opportunity to assemble with other devotees on the spiritual growth path. Attempts to inform people who are disinterested, or unable to comprehend the value of meditation, is a waste of your valuable time and resources and may attract individuals whose presence and behaviors might be disruptive.

Most of the participants at the sessions will be those who are attracted by your consciousness of commitment and your dedication to wholesome, constructive living and spiritual growth. The more unwavering is your attunement with the Infinite, the more you will know how to efficiently fulfill your purposes and sincere devotees will be attracted to you. While being receptive to serving many people, be soul content if only a few come to the meetings, and be regular in your private meditation practice. Strive for quality rather than quantity. Encourage participants to invite their friends and associates

who are sincerely interested in availing themselves of the benefits of group meditation.

How to Start: When you have arranged a time and place for the meetings, if you know a few people who might be interested in participation, invite them. If they do not attend, or attend only once, do not ask them why they are not attending. By extending the invitation, you have done your part. Allow everyone the freedom to make their own decisions.

If the CSA mailing list includes people in your community, we will be happy to mail a form letter recommending that they telephone you if they are interested in attending. Feel free to qualify (screen by questioning) anyone who calls because we do not personally know everyone on our mailing list. We need a two week advance notice to print and mail the announcement letter.

Printed Announcements: If you have announcements printed for distribution to interested people, an easy way to do it is to typeset the announcement on a computer and either run off copies on your computer-driven printer or make photo copies from the original. If you do not have a computer or photo copier, most communities have local companies that will typeset and produce copies of your announcement for a modest fee. Black ink on good quality white paper is acceptable. If you have a thousand or more copies printed to send to a mailing list or place in metaphysical bookstores and health stores, use white paper with dark blue ink.

An attractive, readable type style is Century Schoolbook (used for this text). Printed announcements should be simply designed and in good taste. Include only the necessary information, without artistic embellishments or nonessential comments. Avoid slang and emotional appeals. Prepare the copy, then carefully proofread it for grammar and punctuation. If someone else writes your publicity or advertising copy, read and approve it before having it printed and distributed.

Do not use the CSA flame logo without permission. We use it to designate that published material is from CSA headquarters.

Advertising: Sample advertisements, suitable for a newspaper or magazine are displayed in this section. The size may be adjusted to

fit the specifications of the publication. If you live in a small community, a modest announcement in the local daily or weekly newspaper may be effective. If a "new age" or "holistic" newspaper or magazine is published in your community, this might be a convenient outreach medium. Our experience over the years is that very few readers of "new age" publications are our people; they tend to be fascinated by the new and unusual rather than being focused on psychological transformation. However, a few readers may be sincerely looking for a connection and it can be worthwhile to test advertising to see if the response is positive.

Telephone Contact: You may wish to contract for Voice Mail service to receive messages, or have a private line installed for a telephone answering machine in your home or office. This will allow you to return calls at your convenience rather than be interrupted at random times of the day or on weekends.

Public Relations: If you have public speaking skills and are comfortable being interviewed on radio or television, you might want to present a public information meeting or agree to appear on a radio or television talk show in your community. For a public information meeting, CSA can provide you with an outline for your presentation and advise on planning and facilitating the session. For radio or television appearances, be sure you are well-informed ahead of time. Anticipate the questions you might be asked and have answers prepared. Some producers and hosts actually request a list of questions they can ask, to be sure the interview remains focused and meaningful. Discuss the simple relaxation meditation procedure and be able to describe the positive side-benefits of regular meditation practice. Be relaxed and keep your presentation practical. Producers and hosts of radio and television talk shows are always looking for lively interviews with people who have timely themes to present and are able to provide interesting information for their audiences.

You might also consider presenting a 2-hour meditation seminar for a local group such as a Unity or Religious Science church, or any group that would be responsive. We can provide information about how to do this and a lesson plan to use. For public information meetings and guest presentations, always have our free literature available for those who attend.

Obtaining and Distributing CSA Literature and Books

Always have an adequate supply of our free literature to share with new inquirers, persons who attend sessions, and for distribution in the community.

Truth Journal and other publications which are available from time to time may be requested from our office. Let us know the quantities you can effectively use.

When someone inquires about our work, send them a copy of *Truth Journal* and the *An Easy Guide to Meditation* booklet.

At the meetings, have the literature stacked on a table and invite participants to share it with interested people.

If owners or managers of metaphysical bookstores or health stores in your community are agreeable to displaying our free literature for their customers, keep them supplied with the titles they are willing to display.

Check the shelves of your local bookstore to see if they stock our books. If they do not, send us the names and addresses of the stores so we can include them in our mailings to book dealers.

Contact me if you are interested in establishing a meditation group in your community.

This is an example of an announcement suitable for mailing and for displaying where it may be seen by interested persons. Use information that suits your needs. The name and telephone number used in this example are fictitious. For a poster, increase the type size for better visibility.

MEDITATION GROUP
Practice Meetings for Personal Benefits and Spiritual Growth

Thursdays 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Facilitated by Nancy Smith

Telephone (777) 777-7777

The primary purpose of meditation practice is to nurture spiritual growth. Some side-benefits can be stress reduction, strengthening of the body's immune system, slowing of biological aging processes, more rational thinking, an increase of energy, and an enhanced appreciation for living. This is not a discussion group; it is convened for the purpose of learning and practicing meditation. Helpful techniques and routines are taught and experienced.

Affiliated with
Center for Spiritual Awareness, Lakemont, Georgia
Roy Eugene Davis, Director

These are samples of magazine or newspaper ads.

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Dialogue

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by our readers. Use the form we provide with each issue to participate in this open forum—to let me know your thoughts and needs and for the benefit of others who peruse these pages.

Now that I'm doing kriya pranayama with my mouth closed, should I do the throat sounds (Ahh-Eee) with inhalation and exhalation or just forget them and concentrate on feeling the current in the spinal pathway?

The mild sound in the throat when inhaling is merely the sound that occurs because of the kriya pranayama breathing procedure, as is the mild sound that occurs when letting the breath flow out. When breathing through the nostrils with the mouth closed, create a suction effect in the throat to induce an upward flow of current through the sushumna. Your awareness should be mainly that of a surge of current ascending when inhaling and a gentle downward flow when exhaling. Again, the mild throat sounds are those produced when breathing in the prescribed manner. There need be no conscious endeavor to obviously produce the sounds.

Could you provide measurements for the meditation arm rest you once demonstrated at a retreat at Lakemont?

I found myself combining alternate nostril breathing with kriya pranayama. Is it beneficial to continue this practice?

For a meditation arm rest, the vertical length should be adapted to your body size, so that when you rest your elbows on the horizontal bar you are sitting comfortably upright. The horizontal length should be wide enough to easily and comfortably accommodate your elbows; 20 to 24 inches wide is usually sufficient for this purpose.

Because alternate nostril breathing and kriya pranayama are

practiced for different purposes, they should be practiced separately. Alternate nostril breathing harmonizes flows of life force along the left and right sides of the spine. Kriya pranayama is used to move life force in sushumna, the central pathway.

What about reclining flat on my back when meditating?

To remain alert, it is best to meditate sitting upright. For comfort, especially during extended sessions of meditation, it is all right to have your body supported by the back of the chair. Keep the spine upright so that life forces can more easily flow through it.

There may be exceptions to sitting upright: 1) If one is very ill and confined to bed, meditation can be practiced in the reclining position; 2) should you awaken at night and want to meditate a few minutes before returning to sleep, it is all right to do so lying down.

Sometimes my work schedule makes it nearly impossible for me to meditate twice a day as I have been advised by another organization to do. What should I do?

If you can only meditate once a day, meditate deep and long. Be aware of your relationship with the Infinite all the time. I have known many people who regularly practiced meditation twice daily with little to show for it because they were more focused on their practice than on expanding their awareness and living constructively with a clear sense of purpose.

If you feel a need to meditate more, schedule a longer meditation session once a week on a day when your work duties are not so demanding. This is what Paramahansaji recommended.

In the October-December 1996 issue of Radiance you mentioned your interest in training some kriya initiates to be initiators. I would like to be considered for becoming a kriya initiator. What is my next step?

To be a kriya initiator, your next step is to establish a more personal relationship with me so that I can know you and provide guidelines for proceeding. It will be helpful if you to attend scheduled

meditation retreats here. This will enable you to become more attuned to our approach and allow me an opportunity to work with you.

I have just read *The Divine Romance* by Paramahansa Yogananda. There are frequent references to "Satan" and at least one reference to "disembodied tramp souls." These references seem to me to be inconsistent with his overall teachings and to what you teach. I would appreciate your comments.

Paramahansaji never mentioned Satan to me. In some public talks and writings when he mentioned Satan (for the sake of Christians in his audience), he meant the heaviness or inertia of *maya* (the primordial field of nature of which everything in the cosmos is formed) that clouds soul awareness, not a personalized entity. However, this is not always clearly explained in his edited writings. I personally feel that references to Satan or satanic forces only play to the superstitions of people and should be avoided entirely.

As to "tramp souls," the theory is that disembodied souls strongly addicted to alcohol or drugs or impelled by any craving that can only be satisfied on the physical plane, prefer to remain identified here in the hope of deriving satisfaction. I know nothing about this. Also, it has no relationship to our own program of purposeful living and spiritual growth endeavors.

In the 1996 July-September issue a question was asked regarding more information about Babaji. Your response included the words "valid information." Explain your definition of these words.

We receive "information" when we are informed in any way about something. "Valid" information is well-grounded, therefore reliable. Little is known about Babaji's personal history and activities because he prefers to work behind the scenes and does not consider such matters to be of value to his mission of cooperating with evolutionary trends in our present era.

In some kriya yoga literature there is mention of the theory that its practice contributes to restructuring of the brain. How does this occur?

In relationship to kriya yoga meditation practice, the influences of life forces directed into the brain centers and the effects of superconscious states refine the brain, thus making easier the processing of soul awareness through it.

In relationship to the kriya yoga lifestyle, wholesome, constructive actions enhance total well-being, and learning by applying how-to-live principles, study, and philosophical reflection produces new neural pathways in the brain.

Explain some ways to experience rapid, safe spiritual progress. Also, what impact will the 21st century have on kriya yoga.

The kriya yoga path that I explain is the way to experience rapid spiritual progress. There is no "unsafe" way to grow spiritually because soul unfoldment is always life-enhancing.

As to your second question, let's rephrase it: What impact will kriya yoga have on the next one hundred years and beyond? Because more people will be able to comprehend the value of the teachings and the practices, the numbers of practicing kriya yogis will greatly increase.

Since God is self-complete, what is it that evolution is accomplishing? What is it that is evolving?

The processes of evolution are resulting in the transformation of matter and the awakening of souls.

If we are destined to have awareness restored to wholeness, what is the role of free will?

Our ability to make choices can determine whether we choose to ignore our spiritual destiny and grow slowly as influenced by evolutionary forces alone, or whether we endeavor by aspiration to spiritual growth and supportive lifestyle routines and practices to more quickly awaken in God.

At the moment of individualization, do all souls have the same degree of Self-realization? Did we have a choice whether or not to become involved with nature?

There is no way to be certain about the degree of realization of souls when they are first individualized unless this incident is consciously "remembered." The degree of identification with matter varies. Some souls become unconsciously involved with matter at the physical level, and others at astral and causal levels. Trillions of souls are constantly being individualized. The process did not occur only once; it is ongoing. Because our universe is approximately 15 billion years old, it is still in its infancy. There are other universes of which we are not aware, some of which are much older than ours and some much younger. All universes proceed from God and are sustained by God's power.

Unaware of the immensity and complexity of cosmic processes, we may naively think that our planet is the only abode for souls in the universe and that the soul liberation process is relatively easy. Our thoughts and behaviors often reflect our provincial (unsophisticated because unaware of larger spheres in which life processes are occurring) mind-set. As we become cosmic conscious, we have access to knowledge of the entire range of cosmic activities.

What is tantra yoga? Is there a relationship between kriya yoga and tantra yoga practices.

For *tantra* (that which extends or spreads) yoga practice, one needs knowledge of *shakti* (dynamic energies of consciousness), how these energies function, and how to relate to and work with them. Kriya yoga meditation techniques are therefore of the tantric tradition. The first step for the devotee on this path is the purification of the nadis, the subtle channels in the astral body through which kundalini energies circulate.

Purification of the nadis is effected by spiritual aspiration, which somewhat awakens and expands the soul's consciousness and forces; pranayama practice of various kinds; and the actions of dynamic flows of kundalini energies after they are aroused and begin to spon-

taneously circulate. As soul awareness becomes less identified with the physical body and the mind, apprehension of finer levels of consciousness occurs. When kundalini is dormant (asleep) we are awake only to the sense perceived realms. When kundalini is active (awake) we begin to directly experience the oneness of life. To make easier the continued unfoldment of kundalini energies and its resulting consciousness-clearing effects, one is advised to engage in practices which will result in complete purification of the physical body, astral body, mind, and intellectual faculty. These practices are emphasized in the kriya yoga tradition.

The result of physical purification is radiant health. The result of purification of the astral body is emotional balance and vitality springing from our soul depths. The result of purification of the mind is orderly processing of information and the capacity for rational thinking. The result of purification of the intellectual faculty is the ability to accurately determine truth from untruth.

When kundalini energies have ascended to the crown chakra, a fine essence of consciousness (*amrita*, the so-named "nectar of the Gods") is produced that floods the spinal pathway and the subtle bodies. It is said to "satisfy the gods and goddesses (the regulating forces) of the five lower chakras, thus permeating one's being with the experience of supreme bliss and God-knowledge.

Addendum

A New Vision of Possibilities

If we do not have a new vision of possibilities every time we look to the future, we are self-condemned to live out of our history: to let our memories of past events and (perhaps) limiting present beliefs determine our future.

Having a new vision in relationship to expanding the outreach of information about kriya yoga and ways to more effectively serve devotees of God who are attracted it, is essential. I have been contemplating these matters during recent weeks.

I am aware of the fact that anything we do to further the cause of planetary enlightenment must proceed from the basis of our own inner realization. Without this, all endeavors will be superficial and ineffectual or powerless. When Paramahansaji was asked why his book *Autobiography of a Yogi* touched so many people at a deep level, he said, "Because my spirit is in it." Likewise, if what we do in our endeavors to share this teaching with others is to be transformative, it must be vitalized with our spiritual consciousness. For this, we first have to attentively live the kriya yoga principles and engage in daily meditation until we are absorbed in God. Otherwise our actions, however well-intentioned and skillfully implemented, will be superficial and devoid of worthwhile results.

I am aware of the fact that, because we emphasize conscious, disciplined living and focused spiritual practice that can result in soul liberation, our message is for but a few among the many in today's world. Connecting with and encouraging receptive souls is our mission. Cooperate with me in this ministry of spreading the work throughout the world. Do what you can in your community by distributing our literature and informing interested people about the availability of this teaching. Attend our retreats and seminars when possible. Pray every day for the well-being and enlightenment of all souls everywhere.

Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

April – June 1997 Number 12

HOW TO BE AN ACCOMPLISHED KRIYA YOGI

To be successful on the kriya yoga path, it is essential that we clearly understand the philosophical principles and diligently apply the lifestyle regimens and helpful spiritual practices that can support our endeavors. This path of light is not for anyone who is lazy or lacking in conviction; it is only for energetic, dedicated, courageous souls.

Light Through the Ages

THE ESSENCE OF THE SHANDILYA UPANISHAD

The conclusion of our examination of a rare yoga text written centuries ago by an ancestor of Lahiri Mahasaya.

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

Addendum

Many Possibilities and Opportunities to Serve the Cause of World Enlightenment Await Our Discovery and Participation

The devotee who clearly understands this way of life and the reason for it, and who is constantly inspired to right resolve, does not avoid unpleasant but necessary actions and is not attached to those which are pleasant to perform.

– Bhagavad Gita 18:1–

How to Be An Accomplished Kriya Yogi

In 1951, in Los Angeles, I was with Paramahansa Yogananda and a small group of disciples when he was talking to us about the necessity of purifying and surrendering ego consciousness. A few of us happened to be near the lower side entrance of the Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters building when his car entered the driveway and was parked. He opened the back door of the car, welcomed us with a warm smile, and spoke for several minutes. Referring to his body and personality during that intimate conversation which I vividly remember, he quietly said, "I killed [vanquished] Yogananda long ago, only God dwells here now." The perfected God-conscious state that he intimated was his, is what every kriya yogi should aspire to realize.

When with my guru I was always conscious of his innate purity, the power that flowed through him from an invisible yet intuitively sensed reservoir of Infinite force, and his wisdom. By learning to be attuned to his consciousness when absent from his personal presence, that same purity, power, and wisdom became available to me. He often counseled, "Stay in tune with me and I will be able to help you." As I learned to be in tune with him, I became increasingly aware of his mental and spiritual support. It was then easier to be calm and focused and to meditate effectively. I once heard him say, to a gathering of approximately one hundred people at the conclusion of a public lecture, "Until we meet again, tune in with me, and you will be attuned to God." He was not implying that he was God; he meant that his permanent God-conscious state could, when attuned to, assist others to their own awareness of God.

On the kriya yoga path, mental and spiritual attunement with the gurus of this tradition is extremely supportive. Established in God-consciousness, they are a point-of-contact with the Infi-

nite. Although they do not want to be worshipped, when we have reverence for them and appreciate the knowledge they share and their influence on our lives, we receive "streams of grace" that flow from God through them. This is the basis of Paramahansaji's statement regarding his role in relationship to his disciples: "I am not the guru. God is the guru. I am only God's servant."

When a representative of this tradition initiates and teaches kriya meditation techniques, he or she always first meditates before the occasion and acknowledges the gurus, wanting only to be a conduit through which God's grace and the blessings of the gurus can flow into the initiation sanctuary and be effectively transmitted to the new initiate.

The soul-liberating relationship between the guru and disciple is described in these words attributed to Jesus during a final meeting with his disciples, recorded in *The Gospel According to Saint John* 15:1-5 and 15:7 (modern translation):

> I am the true vine, and God is the husbandman [the caretaker of the plant from which the vine grows]. Every branch from me that does not bear fruit is taken away; and every branch that bears fruit is purged, that it may produce more fruit. Now your minds are cleansed by the words I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; you cannot bear fruit unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches: he who abides in me, and I in him, brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. If you abide in me, and my words [teachings and spirit of truth] abide in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall be done [made manifest] unto you.

God is the source of everything. A God-conscious guru, like a vine through which nutrients flow to its branches, is a conduit through which God's grace flows. Disciples (branches of the vine) attuned to the guru's mind and consciousness receive waves of grace that enliven their soul forces, strengthen their resolve, sustain them in times of adversity, often protect them from misfortune, illumine their minds with the light of higher knowledge,

and restore their awareness to wholeness.

Attunement makes possible the disciple's reception of the guru's life force (*shakti*). This transmission of life force (*shaktipat*) awakens the disciple's dormant soul force (*kundalini*), which contributes to spontaneous physiological and psychological transformations. I experienced this a few weeks after I met Paramahansaji. During the day when I was relaxed, and especially when I sat to meditate, the current would flow powerfully upward through my spine, causing a joyous sensation throughout my body and making meditation easier.

Just as we are naturally attuned to people with whom we have a caring relationship, so when we have a caring relationship with the gurus, we are more inclined to be attuned to their consciousness. The best place to enshrine the guru is in your heart, your innermost being. Do this by nurturing awareness of being one with your guru. It can be helpful to have a picture of your guru (or line of gurus) where you can frequently see it. Just as photographs of one's spouse, children, or friends can elicit pleasant feelings, so seeing pictures of the gurus can arouse feelings of love and be a reminder of your relationship with them.

An obvious way to be more attuned with the guru is to nurture a close relationship. While it may not always be possible to actually be in the physical presence of the guru, it is always possible to assist the guru's mission—which is to assist souls to Self-discovery and liberation of consciousness. If the guru has an organized movement for the purpose of communicating a truth message to others, financially support that endeavor on a regular schedule. This is a very personal way to be in relationship with the teacher and the tradition. If at least a portion of your resources is dedicated to sharing light with others, your selfless demonstration of compassion purifies your mind and expands your consciousness.

Some people, inclined to protect their self-centered attitudes and with behaviors influenced by habits and emotion-impelled whims, err in thinking that spiritual growth processes have

changed through the centuries or that cultural attitudes determine them. One misguided notion, common to many who are ego-fixated, is that in our modern era the average person's sense of individuality and assertive inclination to demonstrate self-determined independence require a different relationship with the truth teacher: one that makes possible the acquisition of higher knowledge and rapid spiritual growth while allowing the preservation of the self-centered condition. Insightful analysis of this irrational idea should clarify the issue: ego-fixated self-consciousness and illumination of consciousness cannot coexist.

Unlike invalid theories and passing fads that emerge and dissolve into obscurity, that which is true does not change. God remains ever the same; lack of spiritual awareness is the primary cause of human suffering; and the way to peace of mind, overcoming of misfortune, and authentic spiritual growth is that of progressive awakening to Self-knowledge and God-realization.

The sequential stages of conversion (a gradual or sudden shift of viewpoint that allows perception of higher possibilities); repentance (turning away from all that restricts soul awareness while directing attention and behaviors to all that frees it); commitment to constructive living and spiritual practice; and right endeavor (to effect psychological transformation and actualize spiritual growth), are necessary to remove the soul's awareness from involvements with attachments to externals and ego-based delusions and illusions. Those who prefer a casual relationship with a guru (a teacher capable of imparting knowledge and transmitting truth-consciousness) or an enlightenment tradition, are like voyeurs who enjoy observing the object of their interest from a hidden vantage point, or dilettantes whose participation is superficial and amateurish. They are not sincerely interested in learning how to grow spiritually, or doing it. If allowed personal access to a teacher, they waste the teacher's time and energies as well as their own. If allowed to associate with sincere devotees, their presence and behaviors are almost certain to be disruptive and nonsupportive of worthwhile accomplishments for

themselves or for others. The following story is appropriate:

> A man who had traveled widely, talked with many teachers and truth seekers in his quest for knowledge. Repeatedly he was told, "God alone is real, all else is insubstantial and transitory. At the innermost core of your being, you are pure consciousness. Realize *that* and you will be free."
>
> "Surely," he told himself, "there must be more to attaining enlightenment than that."
>
> Continuing his search for knowledge, he was finally accepted as a disciple by a guru. After a decade of service in the ashram, and practice of preparatory disciplines, his guru consented to instruct him in higher knowledge.
>
> "God alone is real," the guru said, "all else is insubstantial and transitory. At the innermost core of your being, you are pure consciousness. Realize *that* and you will be free."
>
> The disciple, disappointed, blurted, "I've been here ten years, waiting for your instruction! Is that all you have to say?"
>
> The guru replied, "Truth has not changed in ten years."

To be successful on the kriya yoga path, it is essential that we understand the philosophical principles upon which it is based and diligently apply the recommended lifestyle regimens and spiritual practices that support our endeavors. This path of light is not for anyone who is lazy or lacking in conviction; it is for energetic, dedicated, courageous souls.

To understand the philosophical principles, read my guru's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, my two basic books, *Life Surrendered in God* (with commentary on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras) and *The Eternal Way* (the inner meaning of the Bhagavad Gita), and *Radiance* magazine. The more you expose your mind and inner Self to these teachings, the better your understanding will be and the more meaningful will be your practices. Use your powers of intellectual discernment when you read. As your powers of intuition and innate soul knowledge are unveiled, you will comprehend everything you desire to know. Whenever I read the Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, I discover something new. It is good to read a few sutras from Patanjali's writings and a few

verses of the Bhagavad Gita every day. These two scriptures were recommended to Lahiri Mahasaya by Babaji as the basic texts for kriya yogis to regularly study. In 1991, when our CSA pilgrimage group visited the family home of Lahiri Mahasaya in Varanasi (Banaras), we were shown the small room where he meditated and met with disciples. On the low, wooden bed that served as his meditation seat, along with a few of his personal items was the copy of the Bhagavad Gita he read, and to which he referred when explaining its message.

Memorize the meaning of the words *kriya* and *yoga*. *Kriyas* are constructive *actions* of any kind that we perform to assist ourselves to well-being and spiritual growth. They include lifestyle regimens and practice of the meditation techniques taught in our kriya yoga tradition. *Yoga practice* removes awareness from mental transformations that cause confusion and distortions and makes possible the *yoga of oneness* or samadhi, the culmination of practice. Other yoga teachers who refer to their systems as kriya yoga are accurate if they teach the application of procedures that awaken and free the soul. Their emphasis and method of presentation may not be the same as ours because they may represent another line of gurus or may be teaching according to their personal understanding.

Memorize the meaning of the 2nd sutra in the first section of the Yoga Sutras: *Yogash chitta vritti niroda*; Samadhi (*yoga*) results when the fluctuations and transformations (*vrittis)* that ordinarily occur in the devotee's field of awareness (*chitta*) are resisted and turned back (*niroda)* to their origins and become dormant. It is not necessary to understand Sanskrit; just clearly grasp the meaning of the words and endeavor to actualize them. You will then understand why the recommended lifestyle regimens are supportive of your spiritual growth aspirations and why the kriya meditation techniques are beneficial.

If we read the kriya yoga literature and pray and meditate daily, but are not attentive to wholesome, constructive, purposeful living routines, we are only partially focused on the kriya

yoga path. Total dedication to conscious, right living purifies the mind, regulates mental processes, balances emotions, awakens soul forces—*shakti* (creative energies) of *kundalini* (dormant potential)—that enliven and refine the nervous system and brain, contributes to physical health, and allows our awareness to flow freely. Read the chapter "The Practice of Kriya Yoga" in *Life Surrendered in God*. Memorize the five external disciplines (*yamas*) and the five internal disciplines (*niyamas*) and strive to perfect them by daily practice. *Yamas* (restraints) are practices to regulate mental and sensory impulses and behaviors to ensure supportive interactions with others and with nature. *Niyamas* (not-restraints) are constructive actions implemented to ensure physical and mental purity, contentment, psychological health, acquisition of higher knowledge, and God-realization. Although they are behaviors which are natural to an enlightened person, until one is enlightened, their intentional cultivation and actualization will enhance awareness and remove outer and inner restrictions to spiritual growth.

As kriya yoga initiates, we should know that the effects of our thoughts, feelings, and actions are either *life-diminishing*, *neutral*, or *life-enhancing*. They can restrict soul awareness and cause problems of various kinds, produce no results because they are aimless and powerless, or clear awareness and allow it to expand and enable us to live effectively. Patanjali wrote (Yoga Sutras 2:2): "Kriya yoga is practiced to weaken and eliminate all physical and mental obstacles—for the purpose of realizing God." This reference is not only to the practice of kriya meditation techniques and superconscious states, but to every intentional, constructive action we perform. A kriya yogi who sincerely wants to be accomplished will be committed to conscious, intentional, constructive actions at all times. Although strenuous endeavor is not necessary, knowledgeable, attentive, patient, persistent participation is needed. We have only to do our part; grace will do the rest. Because soul impulses are inclined in the direction of awakening and expansion, when restrictions to their inclinations

are diminished or absent, spiritual growth is spontaneous.

Because growth brings change and improvement, every stage of awakening requires that we be aware of adjustments in outlook and adapt new insights to how we relate to circumstances and others and to how we behave. If this is not done, it is like—to use a biblical illustration—putting new wine in a contaminated bottle. Clear states of consciousness cannot be freely expressed through a mind cluttered with disordered or delusional thoughts, amidst circumstances which are nonsupportive or confining, or when addictive behaviors are allowed to be excessively dramatized. We cannot thrive, flourish, and grow spiritually while clinging to mental states, relationships, circumstances and modes of behavior which are restrictive or which stimulate and energize mental transformations which cloud soul awareness.

Start every day with thoughts of your relationship with God and the gurus, pray and meditate, read a few verses from the Yoga Sutras and Bhagavad Gita, and do your best to maintain Self and God-awareness during the day. You will be more calm and more attentive to performing your duties and appropriately relating to others. Think before you speak, and communicate clearly with conscious intention. Avoid random, nonessential conversations. Casual, social conversation for the purpose of establishing or maintaining friendly relationships is, of course, useful. Excessive talking, or talking about matters which make the mind restless, disorder thoughts, and disturb emotional peace should be avoided. Speak positive, elevating, kind, helpful words to benefit others and to nurture *sattvic* (pure, illuminating) qualities. Pacify *rajasic* (passionate, restless) characteristics and behaviors by cultivating emotional poise and even-mindedness. Eliminate *tamasic* (heavy, consciousness-obscuring) characteristics and behaviors by choosing and actively expressing only constructive thoughts, moods, and actions.

Self-mastery is the first lesson a dedicated kriya yogi must learn and demonstrate. Unless thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are appropriately regulated, neither success in living nor

effective spiritual practice can be accomplished. Self-mastery is easier when aspiration to spiritual growth is compelling and when devotion to God is unwavering. Our attention is effortlessly attracted to that which is of primary importance to us. If we believe that mundane interests and relationships are most important, most of our attention, energies, and actions will be directed to them. If we know that our spiritual growth is most important, all of our attention, energies, and actions will be directed to awakening to Self-knowledge while appropriately attending to necessary and useful mundane duties and relationships. We will have no mental or emotional conflicts about what we do and our spiritual, moral, and ethical principles will not be compromised.

Our endeavors to live right, acquire higher knowledge, and meditate are mutually supportive. When our lives are well-ordered, our thoughts are more rational and concentration is easily focused. When we have higher understanding and meditate regularly, right choices are easier to make and self-control is determined by soul awareness. When we meditate, especially when using kriya techniques, inward turning of attention and soul forces produces mental and emotional calmness, restrains and weakens tendencies to be too outer-directed because of restlessness or sensory urges, and results in natural pranayama: balancing and expansion of *pranas* (life forces).

It is helpful to maintain a consistent routine of meditation practice. Refer to chapters two and three in Section Three of *Life Surrendered in God* to review the basic kriya meditation techniques and routines for beginning, intermediate, and advanced practice. When you sit to meditate, pause for a few moments to relax. Begin with an invocation, to acknowledge your relationship with God and to attune yourself to the consciousness of the gurus. Feel that you are mediating *in* God. After kriya pranayama practice, rest in the tranquil silence for a while; then practice jyoti mudra, looking into the spiritual eye and listening to the inner sound. Remain alert and attentive, without straining. Even

if you do not experience obvious adjustments of states of consciousness or revealing perceptions, faithful adherence to your meditation practice routine will provide a firm foundation for effectively living your life with meaningful purpose.

If you do not have any kriya yoga friends with whom to communicate or meditate, do not despair. The way of an initiate is that of living in tune with the Infinite. With or without friends who share your aspirations, you are ever in God. Your spiritual growth is the result of your right actions and your surrender of self-consciousness that allows realization of wholeness. If you *do* have kriya yoga friends, it is better to enjoy a compatible, supportive relationship without excessive discussion of philosophical matters which, while interesting to do, may distract you from living the truth you know. The opinions of others who are not yet Self-realized are not important; your own realization of your true nature and your relationship with God *is* important.

One of the great blessings of my life was that my guru arranged for me to attend to my spiritual practices alone. After meeting Paramahansaji during the Christmas season in 1949, he had me stay at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters for a few months. He then sent me to the Phoenix, Arizona, SRF center. There, another disciple, Herbert Freed, the minister of the center, assigned my work schedule and was available if I needed further meditation practice instruction. Although we had a compatible relationship, our unspoken understanding was that minimal conversation and individual, private meditation was best for our purposes. After Paramahansaji's passing on March 7, 1952, Herbert was recalled to SRF headquarters and I was informed that I was to be the minister in Phoenix. Paramahansaji had earlier indicated to SRF board members that this was his wish. Free from involvements, without distractions of any kind, I was able to quietly attend to my duties and maintain an intensive schedule of long meditations each early morning and during the evenings hours. Except when presenting the Thursday evening class and the Sunday morning services, and during occasional

interviews with new members, interactions with others were not necessary.

During my teenage years, before meeting my guru, I could fairly easily discern truth from untruth when listening to people talk about religion or when reading books with metaphysical or yogic themes, but after meeting him my powers of intellectual and intuitive discernment improved. I learned to see beyond spoken and written words to the states of consciousness of the speaker or writer. I observed that few of Paramahansaji's disciples, who had been with him for several years and whom he said were somewhat spiritually advanced, while having almost saintly characteristics, occasionally claimed to have had meditative experiences which I doubted (then and now) were authentic superconscious perceptions.

A middle-age man, a dedicated kriya yogi whose lifestyle was disciplined and balanced, easily experienced states of *sabikalpa* (with support of inner perceptions) samadhi when he meditated. Some of his reported astral and celestial experiences seemed to me to be mentally produced wish-fulfillments. A few years later, he progressed to *nirbikalpa* (without support) samadhi. Paramahansaji told me that the man had awakened to the stage of *jivanmuti* (liberated from karmic compulsions while embodied) and would be fully liberated before he made his transition.

Until we are fully enlightened, it is possible to experience superconscious states mixed with mental processes, hence the possibility of being highly Self-realized and still having delusional or illusional perceptions which, while of an astral or celestial character, are but transitory. In the Yoga Sutras (chapter four: "Enlightenment and Liberation") it is recommended that such perceptions be renounced if continued progress is desired.

Some other disciples would occasionally report that Paramahansaji, or one of the other gurus of our tradition, had come to them in a vision to bless them or give them instruction. Now and then a disciple would say, "Whenever I need advice, I turn within and ask Master (Paramahansaji), and he tells me

what I need to know." While it is not our role to try to determine the spiritual growth status of another, insight into what they say about their perceptions can be helpful to us in relating to our own experiences.

Spiritually aware devotees can receive guidance and inspiration during meditation (and when not meditating). The mind may even produce a vision (a conscious dream) to support the episode. The guidance can be meaningful even though the vision is unconsciously self-manifested. If there is attunement with the guru, the guru's "message" or intention can be transmitted to the disciple. More often than not, however, visionary perceptions are produced by the mind and need to be honestly evaluated to determine both their usefulness and the authenticity of insights that might accompany them.

Usually, when one feels that an answer to a question has been telepathically transmitted from a saint, the answer probably emerged from within one's mind or from deeper levels of consciousness. A person may say, "But I didn't know the answer before it surfaced in my mind." At a subconscious level, they may have already known the answers to their questions. It is also possible that their innate knowledge provided insights when the information was not in their subconscious. The answers one "receives," as ideas or feelings that impel thought processes, when asking a disembodied—or embodied but not physically present—soul for guidance are often what the supplicant wants to hear, rather than what needs to be heard.

If we think we have received a message from an embodied saint (or anyone else), the easiest way to be assured of the authenticity of the incident is to communicate with that person and have it confirmed. It is essential to our spiritual growth that we do not allow ourselves to be self-deceived and that we avoid preoccupation with wishful thinking and fantasy. Enlightened teachers do not encourage people to nurture illusions; they want everyone to quickly awaken to Self-knowledge and illumination of consciousness.

Many times I heard my guru say, "The way to be an accomplished kriya yogi is to direct attention to essentials and eliminate nonessentials." That is what he did and what he always told disciples to do. Those who "heard" him and adhered to his counsel, benefited greatly. Those who did not get the message, or who got it but ignored or forgot it, continued to dramatize their whim-guided behaviors.

To be an accomplished kriya yogi, do these things:

- Listen, learn, and practice what you learn.
- Put aside all of your preconceived notions about God and all of your mistaken ideas about the spiritual path
- Renounce all of your doubts and fears. Be well-informed.
- Eliminate all nonessential interests, relationships, and activities from your life. Concentrate on and be involved with important matters.
- Study the philosophical principles that support your life and your spiritual practices until you understand them.
- Choose a wholesome, constructive lifestyle and live it.
- Memorize the *yamas* (external disciplines) and the *niyamas* (internal disciplines) and actualize them by practice.
- Respect the kriya yoga tradition and the gurus (teachers) who have made it possible for you to know of it and be initiated. Improve your mental and spiritual attunement with the gurus, knowing that God is the source of grace.
- Be Self-confident: have soul-based conviction.
- Be insightful, energetic, and results-oriented.
- Meditate daily. Use the kriya meditation techniques to calm the mind; then contemplate to acquire higher knowledge and experience superconscious states. Be alert; disregard mental phenomena and illusory perceptions.
- After meditation, read a few verses from the Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita.
- Perform duties skillfully, remaining soul-centered, ever aware

that you abide in the all-pervading reality of God.

- Do your very best in this incarnation to awaken from old, habit-bound ways—to that freedom which can be yours by your own knowledgeable, concentrated endeavors and God's bountiful, flowing grace.

As you persist, your intellect will be purified, enabling you to discern the truth of your own being and of God and the drama of creation. Self-knowledge is not a state that is acquired by personal endeavor; it is realization to which we awaken. Attentive practice of kriya yoga removes physical and mental restrictions that veil the soul's awareness of itself and God (Yoga Sutras 2:2). The unveiling of intellectual and intuitive faculties occurs gradually when endeavors are moderate and more rapidly when endeavors are concentrated.

At the innermost level of your being you are whole and knowledgeable. Always remember this. Contemplate it in the silence of meditation until it is your vivid realization.

Kriya yoga will ultimately spread throughout the world, and aid in the harmonizing of the nations because of the transcendental perceptions of the Infinite realized by its adherents.
– Mahavatar Babaji's words to Paramahansa Yogananda in 1920 –

The Essence of the Shandilya Upanishad

This upanishad was written many centuries ago by an ancestor of Lahiri Mahasaya. We now conclude our examination of the text. The series began with issue number 9 of Radiance, page 7.

Chapter Two

Then the *Brahmarishi* (God-seer) Shandilya, not having obtained knowledge of *Brahman* (the Absolute) described in the four *Vedas* (the scripture texts of revealed knowledge), approached Lord Atharvan and asked: "What is the knowledge of the Absolute? Teach me the way of knowing it by which I shall obtain that which is most excellent."

Commentary:

With some knowledge of God but not yet with full knowledge of the transcendent Reality, aspiring to higher understanding which can be pointed to by the teacher but can only be Self-revealed, Shandilya asks about it and how it can be realized. *Brahman*, the Field of Pure Consciousness, is not be confused with *Brahma*, the aspect of Consciousness that expands and makes possible objective universal manifestation.

Atharvan replied:

O Shandilya, the Absolute is *satya* [being-truth-reality], *vijnana* [truth consciousness], and *ananta* [the infinite] in which this world is interwoven, that from which all originated and into which all are absorbed, and which being known makes everything known. It is without hands, feet, eyes, ears, tongue, or body [formless], is unreachable [by the mind] and is undefinable. It is

to be cognized by knowledge and [realized] by yoga [*samadhi*]. It is that from which *prana* [life force] was projected. That which is nondual [one, without division], which pervades everything like *akasha* [space], which is extremely subtle, without blemish, actionless, *sat* [being-truth-reality] only, the essence of the bliss of consciousness, beneficent, calm, immortal, and beyond [all phenomena]. That is *Brahman* [the Absolute, Pure Field of Consciousness]. You are *That*. Know *That* by joy and wisdom. That which is the one, shining, the giver of the power of *Atman* [the true Self], the omniscient, the lord [ruler, that which regulates] of all, and the inner reality of all beings, which abides in all beings, which is hidden in all beings and the source of all beings, which is reachable only by yoga [*samadhi*] and which creates, supports and dissolves everything—that is *Atman* [the Supreme Self]. Comprehend the several [the many] worlds [realms] in the Supreme Self. Do not grieve, O knower of the Supreme Self; you shall attain the end of pain.

Commentary:

The reality of Pure Consciousness can be somewhat known by intellectual inquiry. One approach is to arrive at certainty of its existence by discarding all that it cannot be. It can be directly realized by practice of *samadhi*. Preliminary *samadhi* states (*sabikalpa*, with support) provide experience and knowledge of various aspects of the mind and of nature. Transcendent *samadhi* (*nirbikalpa*, without the support of mental actions or of perceptions of nature's forces) is full knowledge of Supreme Consciousness. The teacher is saying, "I can tell you about it but you will have to know it by direct realization." Shandilya is then told, "You are *That* [Supreme Consciousness]." When it is realized by the devotee, delusions and illusions, the causes of confusion and suffering, vanish.

Shandilya asked:

From Supreme Consciousness that is [the source of] Om, imperishable, actionless, beneficial, pure being only and supreme, how does this universe arise? How does it exist in Supreme Consciousness? How is it absorbed in it? Please solve these mysteries for me.

Commentary:

The various upanishads, written as conversations between a truth seeker and a spiritual master, portray the devotee as asking questions that can be answered for the benefit of the reader. This form of writing is the basis for the yoga scripture known as the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is also designated as an upanishad: an account of philosophical and spiritual growth instruction received by a student sitting near the teacher.

Atharvan replied:

Supreme Consciousness is imperishable and actionless. From its formlessness, three forms [aspects] arose: that which is without characteristics; that which has characteristics; and that which is with and without characteristics. That which is pure reality, consciousness, and bliss of Self-awareness, without modifications, omnipresent, and most subtle, undefinable and eternal, is the formless aspect. *Mahesvara* (*maha*, great; *ishwara*, lord or ruling influence) with *maya* (primordial nature) or *avidya* (not-knowledge) is the aspect with and without characteristics. An impulse within the Lord [God] resulted in the bringing forth of universal manifestation. That aspect of Consciousness endowed with all resources, which is all-pervading and established in the hearts of all beings, which is the ruler (regulating influence) and which manifests primordial nature, is God. In God's omnipresent consciousness are all of the gods [aspects of ruling forces]

and beings [individualized souls]. That aspect which regulates the *shakti* [creative force] of Consciousness, is kind to devotees, and is untouched by anything, has characteristics [of transformative influences] only.

Commentary:

The aspect of expressive Supreme Consciousness without discernible characteristics is the Godhead or the Oversoul with potential to impel creation processes. The intelligence aspect that rules or regulates primordial nature is without characteristics; its qualities (*gunas*) are its causative, expressive characteristics. That aspect with characteristics which controls universal forces and is supportive of devotees who aspire to spiritual growth while remaining untouched by anything in nature has qualities which make possible its transformative, redemptive actions. Primordial nature is said to be without knowledge of its own because its actions are directed by intelligence innate to Om, its cause.

In Vedic scriptures the expanding, manifesting aspect of God is named *Brahma*. The aspect which sustains (preserves) creation is named *Vishnu*. The aspect which causes change and transformation is named *Shiva*: the aspect reverenced by yogis intent upon inner transformation that allows unfoldment of Self-knowledge and liberation of consciousness. Although *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva* are often depicted as personalized beings, they are but expressive aspects of God. Likewise, the "gods" and "goddesses" referred to in Vedic scriptures are God's various powers and qualities. Devotees sometimes personalize them for the purpose of establishing a sympathetic relationship and inviting their beneficial influences.

Shandilya inquired:

That which is *Sat* [truth, reality] only and the essence of the bliss of Consciousness—why is it called *Parabrahman* [the tran-

scendent Supreme Consciousness]?

Atharvan replied:

Because it expands and causes everything to expand. Why is it called *Atman* [the indwelling Self]? Because it contains everything, absorbs everything, and is everything. Why is it called *Mahesvara* [the great Lord]? Because by its own power it governs everything. One who knows these secret [esoteric] meanings knows everything [of value]. That devotee who contemplates Supreme Consciousness as being one's own Self, becomes a knower of Supreme Consciousness. That devotee who always contemplates [and fully comprehends] the reality [and actions] of God in relationship to nature is freed from all errors and awakens to full realization of the Absolute.

Commentary:

To conclude the story, the author has the teacher speak the questions which are commonly asked by truth seekers and provide the answers. *Atman* is the indwelling aspect of Supreme Consciousness. Supreme Consciousness, being transcendent, is referred to as *Paramatman* (*para*, beyond; *atman*, indwelling Self). When the indwelling Self relates to a mind and body and assumes a viewpoint of being a mind or body, it is referred to as a soul. This error in perception does not change the fact that the Self is ever what it is: pure consciousness-existence. To be Self-realized is to be fully awake to our true nature.

Om Satyam [Truth]. Thus ends this Upanishad.

Dialogue

The Philosophy, Traditions & Practices of Kriya Yoga

Themes are requested by readers. Use the form provided with each issue to participate in this open forum—to let me know your thoughts and needs and for the benefit of others who peruse these pages.

What are ways to avoid becoming excessively excited or depressed?

First, train yourself to be soul-centered by 1) regular meditation practice; 2) cultivation of mental and emotional calm; and 3) choosing foods and other routines to balance your basic mind-body constitution according to Ayurvedic principles. Someone recently telephoned me to report she and others were planning to start a meditation group in their community. She said, "We're all so excited about it!" Keen interest and enthusiasm is useful in any endeavor; excitement is not useful. Calm anticipation is normal, of course. Excitement is aggravated emotion, usually attended by strong feelings. If we are too easily excited, we may just as easily become depressed when circumstances are not ideal. In either instance, we allow ourselves to be effects of external conditions. Regular, deep meditation will provide inner stability. The cultivation of mental and emotional calm in all circumstances will result in awareness remaining clear and the ability to be appropriately responsive to situations without being emotionally reactive. Irregular lifestyle routines, lack of sleep or rest, and certain foods may result in excessive *vata* (air influence) characteristics which may disturb mental and emotional states.

Mental objectivity and emotional calm can be maintained by being established in Self-understanding with minimal dependence upon externals for happiness and a sense of security and well-being. The tendency to be easily excited or depressed may also be an acquired inclination: learned by observing or being

with others or a self-originated habit that one has allowed to persist. Nurture cosmic consciousness by training yourself to have an overview of life.

I find that I'm often struggling with behavior patterns I learned as a child, that impact negatively on my adult life—particularly in regard to nurturing and maintaining healthy relationships with members of the opposite gender. While my friendships in that regard are all right, it's the intimate ones that seem to more easily fall apart. As a kriya initiate, is there anything I can do to help foster healthier approaches to this problem?

First, be grounded in philosophical understanding, spiritual practices, and purposeful living. While relationships are enjoyable and even useful, dependency or emotional need should be carefully analyzed. Don't try so hard to make relationships work. Be relaxed, honest, fair, and supportive without too many expectations. You don't have to prove anything to yourself or to anyone else. If you are aware of acquired behaviors that interfere with relationships, change your behaviors. You are a spiritual being with free will. Exercise your powers of choice. Think before you speak or act. Be responsive while avoiding emotional reactions. Allow others freedom to be themselves or do what they want or need to do. Don't try to control or manipulate anyone. Improve your attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that need improvement. Be inwardly content at all times. Have the kind of relationships which will be satisfying to you and to others with whom you are involved. There is no need to try to "make a relationship work" in a noble endeavor to fulfill someone else's expectations of what they think is best for you.

Before I began practicing kriya meditation techniques I felt that I was having spontaneous meditations on a fairly "encouraging" basis. Now it seems that I get caught up in the various techniques and then have trouble settling my mind. Any suggestions?

If, when you first sit to meditate, the meditation process flows easily, let it happen. Use the techniques later, when the free flowing experience begins to subside, to gather your forces and again focus your concentration.

When practicing the techniques, be attentive but gentle. Relax into your practice. Avoid effort. Whether using mantra, contemplating inner light or sound, or practicing kriya pranayama, as practice progresses, go more deeply inside so that when you conclude the practice of a technique your awareness is internalized and meditation occurs naturally.

I prefer to sit cross-legged when I meditate. However, I experience back discomfort. A friend recommended a back rest. Is this suitable? If so, where can one be obtained?

Meditation can be practiced in a cross-legged posture or in a chair. The main thing is to be relaxed and comfortable so that concentration will not be disturbed. I do not know of a source for a portable back rest. The obvious alternative is to sit against the wall of a room or against a heavy chair or some other piece of furniture. If back discomfort persists, I would recommend a comfortable chair for meditation.

I notice that when I perform the nasal wash or do alternate nostril pranayama, one nostril still feels partially blocked. It will be the same one that was "closed" at that time the day before.

Do pranayama or the nasal wash without expecting immediate physiological changes. The anatomy of individuals varies, as does response to these procedures. Do as you feel inclined to do and let it go at that. It's more important to be soul-centered and peaceful than to be overly preoccupied with superficial matters. Necessary changes and improvements will occur in time.

I'm somewhat confused. A year after being initiated by you, because I was curious, I was initiated again on two occasions by two

different people who claimed to be representatives of our kriya tradition. How they taught the meditation techniques and the sequence of practice, differ a little bit from how you teach them. Also, each taught differently than the other. What am I to make of this?

I teach the kriya meditation techniques exactly as I learned them from my guru. Babaji taught many techniques to Lahiri Mahasaya, who, with Babaji's permission, emphasized the essentials and systemized them for the convenient use of devotees in secular life. Some of Lahiri's disciples, and their disciples, have also taught the techniques in different ways: to adapt to the needs of their students or because of discoveries they made during their own practice. If one becomes a disciple of an authentic kriya yoga guru and is initiated by him or her, there should be no desire to be initiated by anyone else. One should devotedly practice what has been learned. Otherwise, mental confusion may result, attunement with the initiate's guru line may be weakened, and preoccupation with the issue of who or what is correct will prevent attentive meditation practice and surrender of self-consciousness to the Infinite. After initiating a disciple into kriya meditation practices, Lahiri Mahasaya counseled them not to discuss their techniques or practices.

My problem is that, while I need money and things to get along in the world, I am not strongly motivated to attract or possess money or the things I need. In fact, I tend to waste the money I do acquire and do not always take care of my possessions. I think it has something to do with a deep-seated idea that since the world is illusory, why bother? Sometimes I think I would rather be a hermit and spend all of my time studying and meditating, but I'm not strongly motivated to do that either. What might be a more constructive approach for me? Let me know and I'll try it.

Even though the phenomenal realm is illusory, it is our present abode and we have to learn to live in it effectively. Sri Yukteswar commented, to disciples, "Those who are too good for this world are already inhabiting some other realm." As a spirit-

mind-body being, remember that you, as spirit, are superior to your mind, body, and circumstances. Learn to attract resources and circumstances into your life that will allow you to easily accomplish your purposes. There is no need to be attached to anything, nor is it useful to reject the things and circumstances which are supportive of your well-being. More beneficial than "trying" is to do what needs to be done to enable you to be soul-content and freely functional. My guru counseled me, "You have to live your life [because you have no other alternative]; why not live it in the highest way?" Effectively relating to mundane circumstances with insightful understanding contributes to our spiritual growth. Consider this world as a classroom where you can learn valuable lessons. Demonstrate excellence in every action while you are awakening to knowledge of higher realities.

Practice possibility-thinking: think about and imagine how your life can be more purposeful, meaningful, and enjoyable while continuing your spiritual growth endeavors. Find out what selfless services you can render and consider your doing this to be an important aspect of your *sadhana*, your intentional spiritual practice. Whatever you are wisdom-led to do, whether in regard to everyday projects or to accomplishing spiritual growth, first see it in your mind as already successfully completed, then act with conviction. Whatever you clearly see with inner vision as being accomplished is already a fact. Outer circumstances and inner transformations will occur to allow it to be manifested or experienced. This is how to demonstrate spiritual mastery of yourself and of circumstances.

How long should it take to do one cycle of kriya pranayama?

Because breathing is somewhat deeper when practicing kriya pranayama, when you are relaxed, four to six times a minute is average. There is no need to try to practice slowly. Practice with deep concentration, drawing the current up with inhalation and letting it flow down with exhalation.

Please explore the theme of devotion. Millions of Hindus believe that Krishna is the Lord. We know that it was he who introduced kriya yoga to humanity. The transcendent aspect of God is impossible to know. That which is finite cannot know the Infinite. It is said that even the Buddha refused to talk about the Absolute.

That millions of people believe that a person (Krishna for some Hindus, Jesus for some Christians, someone else for others) does not make it so. Such beliefs are common for people who cannot intellectually or intuitively grasp realities they cannot conceptualize or perceive with their five senses. The ruling Intelligence-Power of the universe is not a person. Krishna was not the original teacher of yoga practices; they were known and practiced long before his time in history. The words attributed to Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita are the words used by the author of that story to describe philosophical ideas and spiritual practices in a style that would appeal to the average person. Although the transcendent aspect cannot be known by the mind, it can be apprehended and experienced by the soul, which is not finite. It is believed that the Buddha remained quiet when questioned about the Absolute because words are inadequate to describe it; it has to be directly experienced.

Addendum

Many Possibilities and Opportunities to Serve the Cause of World Enlightenment Await Our Discovery and Participation

When speaking, as he often did, about the need to share the light of knowledge and to assist others to God-realization, my guru emphasized the importance of both the quality and the quantity of service. *Quality* is the essential characteristic or distinguishing attribute of a thing, person, or circumstance. When we say that something or someone has good qualities we are referring to the characteristics of excellence we perceive. To effectively help others we need to first help ourselves by being grounded in wholesome lifestyle routines and regular spiritual practices.

To a young male disciple who requested permission to teach, Paramahansaji replied, "What do you have to offer others? Prepare yourself first, then you will be able to help others. That is what I did, and that is what you must do."

"An organized spiritual movement," he said, "is the hive. God is the honey. A hive [the organized endeavor] without the honey of God is of little value."

To effectively help others we have to be spiritually awake, God-centered, and competent in the performance of actions. Our qualities of excellence will then be apparent and what we do will bless others and the planet. By living right and experiencing progressive spiritual growth, we serve best.

The quantity work to which Paramahansaji referred is that of helping others to discover and express their spiritual potential. He often said, "I prefer the company of a God-loving soul to [that of] a crowd, but I love [to be with] crowds of God-loving souls." He was mission and goal-oriented. It was his destiny to work with disciples on a personal level and also to reach out to hundreds of thousands of God-thirsty people. Although he knew

that only a few among the many would be responsive, his determination and enthusiasm never wavered. He would say, "I am looking for potential saints." Of those who were not able or willing to commit to God-centered living, he said, "I am planting seeds [ideas impregnated with spiritual energy] in the soil of their [subconscious] minds that will someday sprout and grow."

He often said that he was also planting mental seeds of future projects in the "ether" by visualization and concentrated intention. Many of his seed-ideas are still sprouting and growing into physical realities: meditation temples and retreat centers, book and literature distribution around the world, and thousands of people being attracted to the kriya yoga path. He envisioned his mission (he referred to it as "the work") as extending centuries beyond his earth life.

While my guru's mission-oriented, quantity endeavors were well-received in the West, not many of his former companions in India shared his world vision. Before Sri Yukteswar made his transition, during Paramahansaji's only return visit to India (1935-36), he made arrangements for Paramahansaji to be in charge of his ashrams and other organized activities. During the years that followed, my guru's contact with individuals he appointed to be responsible for the work in India was usually by written correspondence. Although he encouraged his representatives in India to arrange public meetings to attract new people and introduce them to kriya yoga philosophy and practices, most of them preferred to remain reclusive, fixed in the belief that when truth seekers were ready to learn they would seek them out. Even though they were kriya initiates, many of them were content to cling to their provincial (small-minded) attitudes and self-centered behaviors.

It was not until a few years after Paramahansaji passed, that Sister Daya Mata, the new president of Self-Realization Fellowship, was able to go to India to reorganize the work. When she first went, many in the Indian organization, in spite of her having been appointed by Paramahansaji, were not supportive of

her because she was an American, a woman, and not a Hindu. Some even disaffiliated from the organization rather than cooperate with her. Shortly before his passing, Paramahansaji predicted that after he was gone the organization would be purged (he referred to the process as "housecleaning") both in America and in India of uncooperative persons. He told me, "Heads will roll [be cut off]. You will see [that what I am saying is true]."

While it is true that "when the truth seeker is ready, the universe will arrange for the teacher or teaching to be made available," there is an obvious need to present the teachings to larger numbers of truth-seeking souls who will be receptive to and benefit from them. A balanced, sensible approach is best, I feel; we need to be established in our personal circumstances and spiritual practices while being willing to share with others who are ready to learn.

The easiest and most effective way to share with others is to provide them with literature, to inform them and let them make their own choices. Too much personal discussion can be a distraction, or a substitute for learning and application of what is learned. It can also be helpful to provide information about our available private and public programs, where sincere truth seekers can be informed of basic philosophical and how-to-live principles, have their spiritual aspirations nurtured, and learn to meditate in a supportive environment.

We discover possibilities and opportunities to serve the cause of world enlightenment when we are willing to be active participants in the process instead of being content to observe outer circumstances from a distance. If we sometimes wonder why God doesn't cause people to awaken more quickly, we should ask ourselves, "What am I doing to assist the process? Am I living up to my spiritual potential? Am I doing all I can to share the light of truth with others?" Because the inclinations of evolution need responsive agents through which to express, kriya initiates should consider it their spiritual duty to use their abilities and resources to assist others to higher understanding.

When Babaji initiated Lahiri Mahasaya in the foothills of the Himalayas 136 years ago, he permitted Lahiri to initiate others who were sincerely seeking God-realization. Babaji later told Sri Yukteswar that he would send him a disciple to be trained to take the kriya yoga message to the world. That disciple was Paramahansa Yogananda. A century ago, not many people would have been receptive to these teachings: today, hundreds of thousands are receptive, but they need to be informed. We need to ask ourselves, "What are we doing to provide them a spiritual education, and possibly, their liberation of consciousness?"

We first have to live the truth we know. If this is not done, our words will be devoid of spiritual force and our actions will be fruitless. We will be no different from others who may have good motives but lack Self-realization and knowledge of how to effectively accomplish their purposes. Good intentions and skillful performance do not always produce worthwhile results. Paramahansaji illustrated this fact with the words, "The surgical procedure was successful, but the patient died peacefully on the operating table." While outer actions are necessary to communicate the kriya yoga message, the Spirit of God is the empowering influence in our work. It alone can effect useful transformations in the lives of people and liberate souls.

Center for Spiritual Awareness exists to spiritually educate and encourage every person who is sincerely interested in unfolding their innate soul potential and to provide them an opportunity to be initiated into kriya yoga meditation practices. As one of my guru's ordained successors, my mission-purpose is to transmit this helpful information and be a conduit through which God's grace and the blessings of the gurus can flow. Center for Spiritual Awareness is organized because extensive distribution of printed and recorded information is necessary and facilities to accommodate gatherings of truth seekers and devotees have to be provided.

Like most organized spiritual education endeavors, we serve people who express various degrees of interest and participa-

tion. 1) The superficially interested person who makes contact but does not become involved. 2) Individuals who occasionally buy books, subscribe to *Truth Journal*, and attend programs now and then, who are still comparing teachings and have other interests and involvements. 3) Members who derive benefit from their affiliation, read all of the published materials, attend programs when possible, and financially support the ministry. 4) Initiates who are wholeheartedly dedicated to our ideals and endeavors and committed to righteous living and spiritual practice. Most of the people we communicate with are in the first two categories. Our members are, for the most part, steadfast in their participation and with their financial support. Our initiates are fewer. Most of them are supporting members as well as kriya yoga disciples. My vision of possibilities is to continue to serve all interested people while attracting many thousands of members, and more devotees of God who will be initiated. Please share this vision of possibilities with me as we work together for the highest good of everyone and our world.

Note: From now on, the page size of *Radiance* will be like this issue. By doing this, our printing costs will be less and our mailing costs will be greatly reduced, allowing surplus funds to be used for other ministry activities and services.

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Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

July – September 1997 Number 13

THE CONSUMMATION OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

A kriya yoga devotee's aspiration should be to complete the soul liberation process in the present incarnation. To have a lesser aim in life is to choose to remain addicted to ignorance of the truth and to the inconvenient and often unpleasant circumstances that are its results. Are we completely committed to complete enlightenment?

Light Through the Ages

THE SHIVA SAMHITA

An examination of a primary source of information on the philosophy, basic principles, and practices of yoga.

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

Addendum

OUR UTMOST FOR THE HIGHEST GOOD

What we can do, and what God can do through us when we are cooperatively responsive to needs and opportunities and open to the flow of God's empowering grace.

Among thousands of beings, scarcely one strives for perfection; and [even] among those who strive, and among those who are [somewhat] accomplished, scarcely one knows me as I am.

– *Bhagavad Gita 7:3* –

I have found something,
Something rare have I found;
Its value none can assess.

It has no color, it is one,
Indivisible and everlasting.
Untouched by the waves of change
It fills each and every vessel.

It has no weight, it has no price;
Beyond the bounds of measurement,
It cannot be counted,
And through erudition
It cannot be known.

I dwell in it, it dwells in me,
We are one, like water
Mixed with water.

– *Kabir*

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consummate Latin *consummare* = *com-*, together; and *summa*, sum. To bring to fruition, to conclude, to fulfill, to be perfect in every way, to be highly accomplished or skilled.

The Consummation of Spiritual Practice

Four types of virtuous people worship me [the Absolute Reality]: those who are distressed; those who desire material wealth; those who desire knowledge; and the wisdom-impelled devotee.

– *Bhagavad Gita 7:16*

Although it is natural for people to desire relief from discomforting circumstances, to want to be prosperous, and seek knowledge of themselves and of a Higher Power and their relationship to the cosmos, unless Self- and God-realization are accomplished, the innermost level of being will not be completely satisfied.

We do not have to deny ourselves the enjoyment of total well-being or the peace of mind and freedom that affluence and knowledge can provide, in order to awaken to liberation of consciousness. If we aspire to our highest good, along with actualizing these personal fulfillments we can also progressively awaken to spiritual fulfillment.

It is characteristic of souls with awareness identified with conditioned states of consciousness to put their human-nature needs ahead of their spiritual needs. They do this because they are not yet sufficiently knowledgeable about themselves as spiritual beings, the reality of God, and the opportunity they have to be fully enlightened. Because of their confusion, they are inclined to settle for a few score years of reasonable human comfort instead of making the effort to realize and express their immortal, free nature.

Even when one sincerely aspires to spiritual growth, psychological conflicts may be troublesome. Along with desire to be Self-realized, reluctance to discard habits of thinking and behavior

which block spiritual growth may be almost equally influential. Fear to expand awareness may be inhibiting. Beliefs or feelings of inadequacy may prevail. One may not aim high enough, erring in believing that the goal is to attain a glorified, divine condition rather than to have awareness completely restored to wholeness. Wholesome lifestyle routines may be ignored. Meditation practice may be irregular or superficial. Procrastination may be habitual. Restlessness may contribute to psychological conflict and sense attractions may seem appealing. *Tamasic* characteristics of nature may influence the mind-body constitution and cause symptoms of mental dullness and physical lethargy.

An obstacle to spiritual growth common to many people is excessive personality-based self-esteem that results in pride and arrogance. Self-respect devoid of egotism (vain self-righteousness) grounded in awareness of one's innate divinity, however, is of real value because it nourishes constructive mental attitudes and behaviors which improve and refine our character (our expression of emotional, intellectual, and moral qualities).

Until spiritual awakening occurs, a devotee may fear that a purified ego (the sense of individual existence) may result in loss. When spiritual awareness is sufficiently unfolded, purification of the ego removes a primary restriction to the unfoldment of soul qualities. It is helpful to remember that the fundamental cause of lack of Self-knowledge and God-realization is delusion (blind belief that what is not true is true). The most awareness-clouding, consciousness-inhibiting, untrue belief is that the soul is other than a flawless expression of God's consciousness.

Personal accomplishments and uses of soul abilities (of intuition, creative imagination, purposeful intention, concentration, and skillful performance of actions) that enhance Self-confidence contribute to our spiritual growth. Personal accomplishments and uses of soul abilities that nurture self-consciousness contract awareness and keep us attached to conditioned mental states, purposeless behaviors, and meaningless relationships.

To consummate our intention to be fully enlightened and completely liberated in the present incarnation, we need to direct our attention primarily to matters which are entirely supportive of our highest soul vision of possibilities. For this, our thoughts, emotional states, personal behaviors, relationships, and actions should be *sattvic* (pure and elevating) rather than excessively *rajasic* (emotionally charged and restless), or *tamasic* (impure, gross, and awareness-clouding). For faster, satisfying spiritual growth, be attentive to:

1. *Your Daily Spiritual Self-Care Routine* – If you care about your spiritual well-being, adhere to a daily schedule of meditation practice, reading basic truth literature, and contemplation of the purpose of your life in relationship to God. Meditate each day with alert intention, using mantra, kriya pranayama, jyoti mudra, and other meditation techniques taught in this enlightenment tradition, for inner refreshment and to elicit meditative tranquility. Be firmly resolved to sit until you experience deep, soul-satisfaction. Basic sources of information for kriya yogis that were recommended by our line of gurus are Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Read a few verses from both texts each day after meditation practice when your mind is calm and you are spiritually receptive. Frequently think about why you are in this world. Think about your relationship to God. Determine what you can do to remove all obstacles from your life and fulfill your spiritual destiny.

2. *How to Live Your Life* – Live with intentional purpose. Avoid thoughts, emotions, personal behaviors, relationships, environmental circumstances, and actions which restrict soul awareness while choosing those which are constructive and life-enhancing. Be an agent through which the intelligence and power of God spontaneously expresses. You will then be engaged in conscious spiritual practice every waking moment, in harmonious accord

with your highest understanding and your innate inclination to be knowledgeable and free.

Think seriously about how much time yet remains in your present earth-sojourn for you to accomplish liberation of consciousness. If you are young, don't wait until you are older to implement a sensible, focused program of study, spiritual practice, and meaningful living. If the years seem to be rushing by so fast that you are occasionally startled to discover that you have been wasting your time and may soon have to confront your eventual transition to another realm, realistically evaluate your situation. Decide what you are going to do to fulfill your personal obligations, complete your worthwhile projects, and quicken your spiritual growth. Clearly write a plan of action and follow through with dedication.

Your human-conscious life is only a role you are playing. Be aware of this fact and play your role wisely and well, ever established in Self-knowledge, fully conscious of your relationship with the Infinite. When you are established in Self-knowledge, you abide in the truth of your being. When you are not established in Self-knowledge, your awareness is inclined to identify with mental processes, moods, and a variety of sense-perceived objects and circumstances.

You *want* to do your responsible best—do it! You *want* to eliminate all obstacles to your Self-realization and liberation of consciousness—eliminate them! You *want* to be fully awake to the truth of your immortal being and to knowledge and experience of God—be awake!

Keep your mind pure, and you will discover that God is always with you.
– *Paramahansa Yogananda*

The Shiva Samhita

The *Shiva Samhita* is believed to have been written over five hundred years ago by an unknown author. In this text *Shiva* represents the Field of Pure Consciousness, the repository of all knowledge of itself. A *samhita* (Sanskrit, "to bring or place together") is a collected body of knowledge about a chosen subject. The core theme is *yoga*; with philosophical concepts and explanations of *yogic* principles and practices presented in five chapters of 212 verses.

Because the presentation is concise, it is assumed that the reader will either have the benefit of a teacher to explain the inner meaning or will be sufficiently intelligent and competent to understand the text. As in the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna represents an aspect of God that reveals truth to the disciple Arjuna, in the *Shiva Samhita* the author portrays the aspect of God as the ruling influence (*Ishvara*) of nature and the Absolute as being the teachers.

Theme: The One Existence

1. *Jnana* ("gya-na") the Supreme Reality-Knowledge which is intuitively apprehended is alone eternal, without beginning or end. No other real substance exists. [Appearances of] diversities observed in the world result from sense-conditions; when the latter cease, it [Reality-Knowledge] alone remains.

Because Supreme Consciousness is inseparable from its innate knowledge, the Sanskrit word *jnana* is used to refer to the it as pure knowledge. The Field of Pure Consciousness (so named although it has no boundaries), without an origin and self-existent, is outside of the fields of space and time. In truth, nothing exists but it. Our errors of perceptions of differences cause us to mistakenly think the field of nature to be composed of distinct parts instead of being a manifestation of various aspects of the one creative force (*Om*) of Supreme Consciousness. Preconceptions, lack of knowledge of the facts, and the habit of

misperceiving are the "sense-conditions" or limiting factors that contribute to mistakes in perception.

2. I, *Ishvara*, the lover of my devotees and giver of spiritual emancipation [liberation of consciousness] to all creatures, thus declare this exposition of the science of *yoga*.

In yogic literature *Ishvara* is described as the aspect of God involved in regulating universal processes. Although Supreme Consciousness, the Absolute, can be realized, it is not approachable in a personal sense because it is devoid of characteristics. The *Ishvara* aspect of God *is* approachable by devotees. Many yogis, therefore, choose it as their *ishtadevata*, a personal form or aspect of God to which they can relate. They are devoted to it, pray to it, and become aware of its supportive and attracting characteristics which they describe as love.

3. In it [this exposition] are discarded all doctrines of those who dispute various opinions which lead to false knowledge.

In an endeavor to establish the authority of the teachings of this text, the author asserts that it is free from opinions and theories which only serve to further confuse the mind.

4. Some praise truth; others [highly recommend] purification and asceticism. Some praise forgiveness; others stress the value of equality and sincerity.

5. Some praise almsgiving; others laud rituals [dutifully] performed in honor of one's ancestors. Some praise action; others think dispassion to be best.

Alms represent money or goods given for charitable purposes. The practice of performing rites for ancestors is for the purpose of, hopefully, assisting them in the astral realm where they are believed to reside, having their good will, and maintaining subtle mental and spiritual communication between the departed souls and the family members in the physical realm.

6. Some wise persons praise the performance of the duties of the householder; other authorities extol the fire sacrifice as the highest.

Nurturing the family unit and performing duties for the welfare of society is essential for the maintenance and continuation of human beings on the planet. For most people, doing this affords many opportunities to work out or express their desires, grow to psychological maturity, cultivate intellectual skills and creative abilities, and render useful service to the processes of evolution. The average truth seeker is not sufficiently prepared for an isolated life of complete involvement with spiritual practices and meditative contemplation.

A Vedic fire (*agni*) ritual (*hotra*) is performed by invoking the gods (influential cosmic forces), chanting appropriate mantras, and putting offerings of clarified butter (*ghee*), grains, and other natural substances into the fire to release the essences of the offerings into the atmosphere to nourish the elements of nature and establish harmonious conditions.

7. Some praise *mantra yoga*; others [emphasize] the frequenting of places of pilgrimage. Thus diverse are the ways for emancipation which people declare.

A meditation mantra attracts the meditator's attention and takes it into finer levels of mind and consciousness. Some mantras may be chanted audibly or mentally, and "listened to" as the refrain continues after audible or mental chanting. Mantras of this kind are *Om Namah Shivaya* ("I reverently acknowledge Supreme Consciousness"); *Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai, Jai Ram* (Respectful reverence to God, Victory God, Victory God, Victory, Victory, God); and *Hari Rama, Hari Rama, Rama, Rama, Hari, Hari; Hari Krishna, Hari Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hari, Hari. Hari* means tawny, light brown to brownish orange, the color of soma, an herbal essence once used in ritual worship by some religious sects for the purpose of producing pseudo-ecstatic states.

Krishna represents Supreme Consciousness, although some devotees consider Krishna to actually be the personality of the Godhead. Mantras such as *Ham Sa* (*Hong Sau*) and *So Hum* ("I am Spirit") are not chanted, but are mentally recited and then "listened to" to clear awareness and elicit superconscious states. Some traditions assert that the *mantra* they recommend is superior to all others. Others say that verbal chanting is more useful than only listening to the mantra. Teachings about how to use mantras and other methods vary in accord with the understanding (or misunderstanding) of those who teach.

8. Being thus diversely engaged in this world, even those who still know which actions are good and which are not, though free from error, become subject to bewilderment.

Being "free from error" in the context of this verse means that one may perfectly live in accord with what is believed to be best, but may be subject to confusion because of undeveloped intellectual skills.

9. Individuals who follow these doctrines [teachings which are not based on Self-realization], having committed virtuous and nonvirtuous actions, constantly wander in the worlds in the cycles of births and deaths, bound by dire necessity.

The doctrine of reincarnation is that spiritually asleep souls are, of necessity, compelled by their clouded states of consciousness and conditioned mental states to experience the effects of those states as they undergo transition from realm to realm.

10. Others, wiser among the multitudes and eagerly devoted to the investigation of occult matters, declare that souls are many, eternal, and omnipresent.

Occult (Latin *occultus*, from *occulere*, to conceal) interests of wise truth seekers are focused on understanding the inner causes of effects, processes which are generally unknown by and inac-

cessible to the average person. They may discern that all souls, being units of God's consciousness, are eternal, and are expressive throughout the universe. The occult interests of unwise people usually include fascination with supernatural phenomena or magical practices.

11. Others say, "Only those things can be said to exist which are perceived through the senses and nothing else. Therefore, where is heaven and the astral realm?" Such is their firm belief.

People with undeveloped powers of discriminative intelligence, whose intuition is not yet awakened, and who rely only on the testimony of their senses for information, may be inclined to believe themselves to be mind-body creatures confined to the physical realm. It is difficult for them to believe that higher (refined) and lower (gross) astral realms exist

12. Others believe the world to be a current of consciousness and not a material entity; some say the void is the ultimate. Others believe in [the separate existence of] two [distinct] essences—[*prakriti*] matter and [*Purusha*] Spirit.

13. Thus believing widely different doctrines, with faces turned away from the supreme goal, they think—according to their understanding and education—that this universe is without God.

The universe (Latin *unus*, one, and *versus*, past participle of *vertere*, to turn) *is* a "current of consciousness," a continuous, orderly manifestation of primordial nature (Om and its self-expressed and self-referring aspects of space, time, and cosmic forces). The Absolute, devoid of characteristics, is the ultimate aspect of consciousness to be realized by the enlightenment-aspiring soul. Because nature (*prakriti*) emerges from God's being or Spirit (*Purusha*) there is no division between nature and Spirit; they do not exist separately. *Samkhya*, the philosophical system upon which *yoga* practice is based, describes the processes and stages of cosmic manifestation.

14. Others believe there is a God. Basing their assertions on a variety of irrefutable arguments founded on texts, they declare there to be a difference between the soul and God, and are anxious to establish the existence of God.

15. These, and many other sages of various denominations, have been declared in the scriptures as leaders of the human mind into delusion.

16. It is not possible to describe fully the doctrines of these persons who are so fond of quarreling and contention. People thus wander in this universe, being driven away from the path of emancipation.

Various scriptures set forth diverse opinions about God and the relationship of God to souls. Souls are individualized units of God's being identified with mind and matter. Some religious-philosophical systems, propounded by unenlightened people, mistakenly declare souls to be distinct creations of God, subject to death or extinction if not compliant with God's will or possibly acceptable for a heavenly reward if they are obedient to God's will or believe in a certain doctrine.

Theme: Yoga, the Only True Way

17. Having studied all the scriptures and having repeatedly pondered over them well, this *Yoga Shastra* [*yoga* scripture] has been found to be the only true and firm doctrine.

The author, admitting to be well-informed about scriptural lore, asserts that the information presented in this text is valid: that it is knowledge acquired by reason and insight.

18. Since by *yoga* all this is known for certain, all exertion should be made to acquire it [the knowledge of Supreme Reality]. What, then, is the necessity of any other teaching.

Self- and God-realization removes all doubts by providing true knowledge of God and cosmic processes. It is by *yoga* (practicing procedures that culminate in *samadhi*) that true knowledge is

Self-revealed. *Samadhi* is "the bringing together" (from the verb root *sam*) of individualized awareness with Supreme Consciousness. Theories and opinions about the reality of God are not needed to support one's actual realization of God.

19. This *yoga* scripture is a very secret doctrine only to be revealed to a high-souled, pious devotee in all the three worlds.

Precise information about the reality of God and how to realize it is only of value to individuals who are pure-minded, psychologically prepared, and devoted to spiritual practices for the purpose of accomplishing Self-realization. People whose minds are confused, have disabling psychological conflicts, or are not willing to learn and to engage in intentional spiritual practices, will neither understand nor benefit from this information. The "three worlds" are the physical, astral, and causal realms in which billions of souls reside with circumstances which correspond to their states of consciousness and desires.

Theme: The Way of Applied Work or Action

20. Two systems [approaches to Self-realization] are found in the *Vedas*; the way of *karma* [action] and the way of *jnana* [true knowledge]. These are each subdivided into two parts.

The several *Vedic* (*Veda*, from *vid*, "to know") scriptures are said to describe the revelations of enlightened seers. As with all scriptures, they are not to be naively believed; they are to be examined so that the truth of their assertions can be discerned and their recommended practices tested by personal application.

Karma yoga is the way of awakening to soul freedom by the skillful, selfless or nonattached performance of necessary and wisely chosen actions. *Jnana Yoga* is the way of intellectual discernment and intuitive apprehension of knowledge of the Self and of the reality of God.

21. The way of action requires that one know about those which are prohibited and those which are enjoined.

Prohibited actions are those which are not supportive of the well-being of the one who performs the actions or of those who are (or that which is) influenced by them. Enjoined actions are those which are authoritatively recommended as being constructive and beneficial.

22. When prohibited actions are performed, they cause misfortune. From the performance of enjoined acts, merit certainly results.

If the one who performs constructive actions is attached to them, good (constructive) karma is accrued: the mind becomes more pure and positive, and constructive actions become the normal behavior. If one is nonattached to constructive actions, soul qualities become pronounced, insight into subtle laws of causation is acquired, and liberation of consciousness is made easier.

23. The enjoined actions are threefold—regular, occasional, and optional. By nonperformance of rites [routines and duties] that should be performed, misfortune is accrued; by their performance no merit is gained.

Prescribed constructive actions are (1) those which should be performed regularly; (2) those which need to be performed only occasionally; (3) those which are a matter of personal choice. Examples of the first order are one's daily self-care routine, prayer and meditation practice, all actions necessary to personal well-being and the well-being of others with whom one is in relationship, and fulfillment of duties and obligations to maintain an orderly relationship with members of society and the planet. Examples of the second order are those actions which serve to meet minimal or occasional needs. Examples of the third order include other constructive actions one chooses to perform.

24. Fruits [effects or results] of actions are twofold—heaven or the lower astral realms. The heavens are of various kinds and the lower astral realms are also diverse.

25. Virtuous actions are truly heavenly; nonvirtuous actions produce misfortune. These [certain] effects are the natural outcomes of actions and nothing else.

26. Souls enjoy many pleasures in heaven; many intolerable pains are suffered in the lower astral realms.

Unless souls are fully enlightened when they depart from this world, their astral circumstances correspond to their mental and emotional states and states of consciousness. In this text, reference is made to heavens, to purer astral realms inhabited by souls with varying degrees of spiritual awareness and astral realms inhabited by deluded, habit-bound souls.

27. From nonvirtuous actions pain results; from virtuous actions happiness results. For the sake of happiness [wise] people constantly perform virtuous actions.

28. When the sufferings for nonvirtuous actions are completed [in the lower astral realms], reincarnation is experienced; when the effects of virtuous actions have been exhausted, the result is the same.

29. Even in heaven pain is experienced, caused by observing the higher enjoyment of others. Truly, there is no doubt that this whole universe is full of sorrow.

Note that after the effects of nonvirtuous and virtuous actions cease to be influential, unenlightened souls tend to be drawn back to a physical body by the force of desires, habit, and sense cravings. Souls are attracted to circumstances which enable them to satisfy their desires and needs. Even in the more refined astral realms, souls not yet fully enlightened may be unhappy about their condition when comparing it to the superior spiritual states and more harmonious circumstances of others who are there.

30. *Karma* is twofold: actions which are constructive and actions which are destructive. Both kinds are the cause of bondage.

31. Those who are not desirous of experiencing the fruits of their actions in this or the next world should renounce all actions which are done for the purpose of having their results. And having similarly discarded attachment to daily and occasional rituals, they should employ themselves in the practice of *yoga*.

Karma yoga, the way of selfless, right action is liberating. Mental or emotional attachments to actions (and their results) of all kinds are soul-restricting. True *yoga* (unfragmented awareness or constant *samadhi*) while performing duties is actualized by acting with insightful understanding.

Theme: The Way of Knowledge

32. The wise yogi, having realized the truth of actions and their effects, should renounce them; having left both virtue and nonvirtue, the yogi should engage in the way of knowledge.

What is meant is that nonconstructive actions should be avoided and attachments to all actions should be renounced so that higher understanding can be acquired and innate knowledge unfolded. To depend upon even constructive actions to produce desired spiritual growth effects is to remain limited by the law of causation. The enlightened soul performs constructive actions to cause intended circumstantial effects while experiencing spontaneous, soul-impelled unfoldments of spiritual consciousness.

33. The *Vedic* [and any other revealed] texts which declare "the spirit ought to be perceived" and "one must hear about it" are the real saviors and sources of true knowledge. They should be studied with care.

34. That Supreme Intelligence which incites the functions of the senses into the paths of virtue or nonvirtue, am I. This whole universe, animate and inanimate, is [produced] from me. All things are preserved

by me. All are absorbed into me at *pralaya* [universal dissolution] because Spirit, only, exists and I am that Spirit. Nothing else exists.

The mind is energized and the senses are enlivened by the life forces and the impulses to action of the soul. In this verse, the author portrays, not the *Ishvara* aspect of God, but the Absolute as declaring to be the Supreme Intelligence and the Omnipresent Reality which produces (emanates) and maintains the realms of nature. After many trillions of solar years, a universe is dissolved and the constituent qualities (*gunas*) rest in a condition of equilibrium. The objective field of nature then no longer exists; the Godhead and the field of primordial nature continue to exist. After a duration of nonmanifestation, the three *gunas*, impelled by an impulse to manifest, are instrumental in emanating another universe. During the phase of absorption of the *gunas* into the primordial field of nature, unenlightened souls remain unconsciously involved with primordial nature and are impelled into involvement with objective nature when another universe is manifested. Fully enlightened souls are not compelled into world involvement, but may play a role in evolutionary processes.

35. As in innumerable cups filled with water, many reflections [of the sun] are seen but the substance [the water] remains the same, so individuals are innumerable but the enlivening Spirit, is one.

Some commentators on *Vedic* texts define the soul as being a reflection of pure consciousness (*atman*) shining in the organ of intelligence (the subtle medium of discriminative discernment). Souls, though individualized fields of pure consciousness, are not independent, self-existent beings; they are all expressions of the one enlivening Spirit.

36. As in a dream the soul creates many objects by mere willing, so is this universe [manifested].

The idea that the universe is a dream-creation occurring in cosmic mind is common among yogis. Just as when we dream, we can create any dream object we desire, so the Godhead manifests the universes by the power of its impulse to manifest.

37. As because of illusion [misperception] a rope may appear to be a snake, similarly, the whole universe is superimposed on *Paramatman*, [the Supreme Spirit].

38. As when true knowledge of the rope is obtained, the erroneous notion of its being a snake does not remain, so by the arising of true knowledge of the Self the [erroneous] notion of the universe as self-existent matter, being a delusion, vanishes.

39. As when true knowledge of mother of pearl is obtained, the notion of its being silver does not remain, so by knowledge of Spirit, belief in the universe as being self-existent matter is known to be a delusion.

40. As when a person applies oil on his eyelids, a stalk of bamboo may be mistakenly perceived as a serpent, so the universe appears in the Supreme Spirit because of the delusive pigment of one's habit [of misperception] and imagination.

41. As by true knowledge of the rope, the belief that it is a snake is known to be delusion, so by spiritual knowledge the belief that the universe is self-existent matter is known to be a delusion. As through jaundiced eyes the color white may appear to be yellow, so because of ignorance [absence of knowledge] this world is misperceived—an error very difficult to remove.

42. As when the jaundice is cured the patient sees the white color as it is, when delusions are banished the truth of Spirit is revealed.

43. As a rope can never be a snake in the past, present, or future, so Spirit which is beyond all *gunas* [constituent qualities of nature] and pure, never becomes the universe.

Illusional knowledge may be difficult to banish because of the habit of thinking and behaving with awareness confined to

the senses and to acquired erroneous opinions. Valid knowledge enables one to discard untrue opinions and to perceive with accuracy. Even when meditating, some spiritually advanced devotees may experience difficulty in discarding illusions and fantasies that are obstacles to experiencing pure superconscious states and Self-realization. Until liberation of consciousness is accomplished, an inclination to want to identify awareness with an object may be influential. The urge to cling to delusions (untrue beliefs) and illusions (misperceptions of what is observed) is the final awareness-clouding habit for a devotee to renounce.

44. Some wise people, well-versed in scriptures, having the knowledge of Spirit, have declared that even the gods are noneternal and are subject to birth, death, and destruction.

The "gods" are the cosmic forces that influence nature and human affairs. In *Vedic* literature they are sometimes personified as supernatural beings. If they were, the author of the *Shiva Samhita* declares, they, too, being noneternal, would be subject to the same laws of mundane and cosmic causation as souls in ordinary states of consciousness.

45. Like a bubble in the sea emerging because of the agitation of the wind, this transitory universe arises from Spirit.

The "cosmic wind" that agitates the "sea" of primordial nature is the impulse from within the Godhead to express. Universes are manifested, persist for a duration of time, and are eventually absorbed back into the field of primordial nature. The Field of Existence-Being remains unchanged.

46. The unity of life exists. Diversity does not always exist; there comes a time when it ceases. Many and varied distinctions arise only because of the illusory character of the universe.

The universe, comprised of cosmic forces, is not an illusion.

One's illusions about it are due to imperfect perceptions and lack of comprehension of its varied aspects and characteristics.

47. Whatever was, is, or will be, either formed or formless—the entire universe—is superimposed on Supreme Spirit.

48. *Avidya* [not-knowledge, ignorance] is born of untruth and in essence is unreal. How can this universe with such a basis for its appearance be real (self-existent and permanent)?

Primordial nature (*maya*) only obscures the soul's perception of knowledge; ignorance of the reality of the true Self does not exist because Self-knowledge is innate. The universe is an emanation of primordial nature which is a self-manifestation of Om. It floats in the Mind of God as a dream-event appears in the mind of the person who dreams it.

– to be continued

God is your life; you have never had another.
– Paramahansa Yogananda –

Dialogue

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Themes chosen for this open forum are requested by readers of *Radiance* magazine. Your participation is invited. Use the form provided with each issue or a write a letter.

My question is in regard to the continuation of the transmission of the kriya yoga tradition revived and emphasized by Mahavatar Babaji—the teachings and opportunities for initiation and discipleship training for truth seekers in our present time and into the future. How is this work presently proceeding through the spiritual descendents of Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Sri Yukteswar? And what about the opinion of many people that Paramahansa Yogananda left no successors to continue the lineage from him?

Your inquiry is timely and deserves to be examined.

Babaji's mission is to assist people to awaken to their spiritual potential and to influence evolutionary trends in our present Era. Preferring seclusion, and unknown to the public, he silently radiates his God-realization into planetary consciousness and the collective consciousness of society.

Of the remaining spiritual descendents of Lahiri Mahasaya and Sri Yukteswar, little information is available. In India, one will have to search long and arduously to find a genuine kriya yoga guru, and then will probably be disappointed. Of the few who claim to represent our kriya yoga tradition and who publicize their willingness to initiate people, in India and other countries to which they sometimes travel, I'm sorry to say that I cannot recommend any of them. If it seems that I am portraying a pathetic picture of the state of kriya yoga teachings in the world today, I am only reporting the facts.

Paramahansa Yogananda's writings, and the good endeavors

of ministers and teachers of Self-Realization Fellowship, continue to make information about kriya yoga philosophy and practices available to increasing numbers of people.

Soon after Paramahansaji made his transition, on the evening of March 7, 1952, in Los Angeles, California, members of the board of directors of the organization he founded announced that he was considered to be "the last in the line of SRF gurus" and that "his teachings" would be the guru of all individuals who would become members of the organization. The published statement does not assert that the guru line actually stopped with Paramahansaji, only that the board of directors will not acknowledge another guru in their organization.

The opinion that Paramahansaji did not leave behind any successors presents a serious problem: How can a meaningful guru-disciple relationship be established with new truth seekers if the guru is not embodied? The answer to this question is obvious: A meaningful guru-disciple relationship cannot be had with a teacher with whom one is not in direct communication. It may be that some individuals who personally knew, and became disciples, of Paramahansaji in a previous incarnation have recently been (or in the future will be) attracted to his teachings. Their attunement with his consciousness can persist although they may need to be personally taught and initiated by a qualified teacher in our tradition.

My concern is that many sincere truth seekers are misguided, confused, and attempting to live on hope instead of confronting the facts. My guru left this earth realm 45 years ago, and no one knows where he is. While his spirit is, of course, omnipresent, the individualized unit of "Yogananda awareness" is involved elsewhere. He once said that after his passing he would rest for a while, then reincarnate and be with Babaji in the Himalayas. I am not aware of any specific information he provided about when he would return in a new physical body. I did hear him say, in an informal talk with disciples during an evening dinner on his fifty-

ninth birthday (January 5, 1952), "I will come back and watch you. I will know you, but you will not know me. My colors will be blue and gold." (Paramahansaji preferred the colors blue, gold, and white for his organization's printed literature and for decorating its buildings and temples.) In his writings and talks he often referred to these colors when describing the light of the spiritual eye. Gold, he said, is the color of the vibratory frequency of Om; dark blue is the color of God's all-pervading consciousness; white represents the Spirit of God.

When I was with my guru, I heard him say that he expected some of his disciples to be gurus in our kriya yoga tradition. When he ordained me (autumn, 1951), to another male disciple who was present and who had questioned him about his words to me (that I should initiate others), he exhorted, "You, too [you should also do it]! The same God who is in me, is in you! What I have done, you should do!"

I know that he permitted a few disciples (who have since died) to initiate and teach others. I am the only remaining *Satguru* (truth teacher-initiator) disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda in our kriya yoga tradition.

I have compassion for the many people who naively believe themselves to be disciples of my guru or of other teachers who dwell in subtle realms, but with whom they have no real relationship. Although often sincere in their beliefs and devotion, they are in a hopeless situation. They may pray for guidance and be aware of only their own thoughts which they may falsely presume to be a response. Their desire to experience authentic spiritual growth may be thwarted because of their ignorance, of which they are not aware. They do not know that hearing about an enlightenment teaching or an enlightened teacher is not the same as actually understanding the teaching or having a personal relationship with a truth-conscious teacher. Adrift on the sea of life without an anchor, they are clinging in desperation to "false gods," and in their heart (the core of their being), they know it.

For some devotees who are unable to understand and apply these teachings, the primary obstacles to learning are arrested emotional growth and undeveloped intellectual skills. Emotionally immature devotees with diminished intellectual powers are unlikely to experience satisfying spiritual progress.

The disadvantages of not having a personal relationship with a guru, if one is needed, are that (1) clear, precise instruction cannot be imparted; (2) guidance and wise counsel cannot be provided; (3) real initiation cannot be had. Instruction in meditation practices, while helpful, is not initiation, it is only the sharing of information.

Without a guru, if one is capable of learning, information about philosophical and how-to-live principles can be gleaned from books and other authoritative sources. If one is rational and intuitive, guidance and insight can be obtained from within. If one sincerely yearns to be Self-realized, spiritual awakening can occur spontaneously. Unfortunately, many people are not able to comprehend what they read or hear, are neither rational nor intuitive, and are so confused that their yearning for Self-realization is either inconstant or misdirected. They may not really want to immediately know the truth. They may only want a little improvement of their human condition with some hope for enlightenment in the future—perhaps at the last moment when they finally die to this world.

My concern is not so much about what others are or are not doing to advance the spread of kriya yoga teachings and provide spiritual growth opportunities to receptive souls. I am primarily interested in knowing what I can do, and doing it. I fervently hope that you—and others who read these words—are also interested in knowing what you can do to assist this good and necessary work, and are committed to doing it.

If we are to be effective kriya yoga representatives, we have to first attend to our own spiritual well-being. We cannot share with others what we do not have, or teach others what we do not

know. We have to "live the kriya yoga life" if we are to understand the teaching. We then have to reach out to others who are willing to learn and to practice what they learn. Paramahansaji often extolled the usefulness of both quantity and quality when speaking of spreading the teachings. The *quantity* work is to make the teachings available to interested truth seekers, to provide them the knowledge of how to live more wisely and well. The *quality* work is directed to devotees who have the character and competence to commit to conscious living and spiritual practice that will quicken their spiritual growth and liberate their consciousness.

Among the many who are interested in this kriya yoga tradition, there is much talk without much positive action. There is often much interest in social interaction with others on the path, but little evidence of focused resolve to know the reality of God. I am only interested in constructive, intentional actions that produce worthwhile, permanent results.

Is it important to see the colors of the chakras when meditating? What about the usefulness of seeing auras?

It is not essential to one's spiritual growth to actually see the colors of the chakras when meditating. While it can be interesting to see these lights, it is of more value to quiet the transformations of the mind and experience clear, superconscious states and samadhi. Remember the second verse of the first section of Patanjali's *yoga-sutras*: *Yogash chitta vritti nirodha*. The precise meaning is: Samadhi (*yoga*) is accomplished by turning back and quieting (*nirodha*) the wavelike fluctuations (*vrittis*) that occur in the ordinary field of individualized awareness (*chitta*). Any meditation technique or routine helpful to this end is useful. When not meditating, mental fluctuations are pacified by the cultivation of patience (soul contentment) and observant, emotional detachment from thoughts, moods, and circumstances that might otherwise cause distress and blur or distort awareness.

To see auras, astral perceptions need to be developed. It is not essential for one's spiritual growth to see auras. Many people who can see auras (or who claim to see them) are still at the second stage of spiritual unfoldment. Others who claim to see auras may admit that they do not actually see them; they have mental impressions of what they imagine auras to be like.

Are there any enlightenment movements other than ours that teach that we are not in the *Kali Yuga* (Dark Age) time-cycle?

None that I know about. Even among "learned" yogis and swamis, and others who should know better, it is "traditional" to speak of our present time-cycle as one of Dark Age circumstances even when an alternative viewpoint is presented to them. If they are merely teaching a traditional opinion because it is more convenient to do so than to educate people, they are perpetuating a myth. If they do not know any better, one has to wonder why their spiritual education is so lacking, or seriously question their degree of (presumed) enlightenment.

Mahavatar Babaji and Lahiri Mahasaya taught that the present Age (*Dwapara*, the second), during which electricities and other fine forces in nature have been and are being discovered and utilized, began to obviously emerge 297 years ago and will continue until 4100. It will be followed by a Mental Age (*Treta*, three) of 3600 years duration and two consecutive Truth Ages (*Satya Yuga*) of 4800 years each, during which enlightenment will be the common condition of most people. Sri Yukteswar explained the reasons for the manifestations of these cycles in his book *The Holy Science*. According to him, the causes of the time-cycles are related to the influences of cosmic forces emanated from the center of our galaxy that unveil the intellectual faculties of most people during ascending Ages and cloud them during descending Ages. The idea that cosmic forces can cause these effects is difficult for the average person to grasp, which is one reason why many people are confused about the subject.

Sometimes, when I view the state of the world as a reflection of the states of consciousness of its almost 6 billion human inhabitants, I am reminded that we are only in the dawning phase of the current ascending Age. Knowing this, however, also provides insight into what is yet to unfold, and confidence in the intelligently directed Power that determines the processes of evolution and the awakening of souls.

I have been practicing kriya pranayama twice a day for several months. What are the guidelines for increasing the number of repetitions practiced at each sitting.

New kriya yoga initiates are advised to practice 14 times when first sitting to meditate, once or twice a day. After a few months to a year, if practice of the technique is easy, you can increase the number of repetitions. The usual instruction is to add one or two repetitions each day until a total of 24 pranayamas are practiced at a sitting. After six months to a year, the number can be increased to 36. This schedule can continue: every six months, add another 12 repetitions at each sitting. Another way to proceed is to simply do as many as you feel inclined to do, so long as you are comfortable and are not straining to accomplish a certain number. Yet another way to intensify your practice is to stay with lower repetitions and include a third practice session each day. Sit in the aftereffects tranquility of kriya technique practice, to contemplate higher realities and to allow superconscious influences to benefit the mind and body.

At what stage of progress should one request to be instructed in the second, third, and fourth kriya meditation techniques?

Usually, when one is comfortable doing 100 or more basic kriya pranayamas at a sitting, the advanced techniques can be learned and effectively practiced. The second kriya technique that Paramahansaji taught involved more concentrated attention at

the chakras along, with mental chanting of Om or seed (*bija*) mantras and contemplation of the sound and light frequencies of the chakras. The third and fourth techniques are rarely given because proficiency in the practice of the first two techniques is a prerequisite. They are practiced by using the basic pranayama, followed by mental chanting of special mantras and other procedures. Paramahansaji always counseled disciples to become skilled practitioners of mantra meditation, the basic kriya pranayama, and contemplation of inner light and sound. These techniques are sufficient to calm the mind and improve concentration so that preliminary superconscious states and authentic samadhi states can be experienced.

I am fairly regular in the practice of the kriya meditation routine, however, because of my lack of devotional ardor, I think I may be engaging in mechanical practice, as a duty to be performed. Should I continue like this, or should I endeavor to cultivate more devotion?

Devotion puts us into a sympathetic relationship with God. It arouses our soul forces, calms the mind, purifies the ego, and energizes us to concentrated endeavor. Kundalini shakti, dormant soul energy, is awakened by devotion. If one is surrendered to the actions of the awakened energy and aspires to Self-realization, the energy will flow to the spiritual eye and crown chakra. Without aspiration to be Self-realized, the devotee may experience ecstatic states while remaining involved with delusions and illusions. Kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra are two useful meditation techniques to use to direct the flow of vital force upward.

When we are devoted to God we are inclined to think more about what we can do to become God-conscious and less about what we can gain from our spiritual practices. We should not desire to know God because of the benefits we might receive; we should desire to know God as God is. When God-realized, we are whole. We are impelled to be more aware of living right and of

attending to regular prayer and meditation practice. Devotion to God should not result in shallow-minded thinking; it should arouse us to positive action and strengthen our resolve on the spiritual path. Devotion should reinforce and vastly improve our practice of meditation techniques.

Even mechanical practice of meditation techniques is better than not practicing meditation at all. The psychological and physiological benefits of meditation practice are of value, and gradual spiritual growth will occur because the mind and nervous system are refined so that soul awareness is more easily expressive. When devotion supports our aspiration to Self-realization, meditation is more enjoyable and effective.

Along with cultivating devotion and being attentive to regular meditation practice, remember that it is of equal importance to live with meaningful purpose. Kriya yoga practice includes right thinking, right behavior, wholesome relationships, and intentional, constructive actions. One of the reasons why many devotees do not experience satisfying spiritual growth is because they separate their spiritual practices from their everyday activities. They inwardly hope for soul unfoldment and pray for evidence of God's grace in their lives, while outwardly dramatizing habit-bound behaviors.

The transformations occurring in the unsettled mind
are driven by restless flows of prana (life force).
– Lahiri Mahasaya –

Our Utmost for the Highest Good

As kriya yoga initiates, neither superficial thinking about philosophical concepts nor halfhearted implementation of the basic principles and practices is acceptable. The *very minimum* endeavor that is required of us is *our utmost* for the highest good. When we do our part to the best of our ability, God's influential, empowering grace will do the rest.

If you can connect to the Internet, peruse our Website from time to time and inform others about it:

http://www.csa-davis.org

Our purpose for being on the Internet is to be more visible and readily available to people all over the world. When they connect with it, they can read about our various services and publications, and see color pictures of CSA headquarters. We receive E-mail communications from many regions of North America, Europe, South Asia, and India. Web browsers are invited to request a free literature packet so that they can become involved in our work. We do not encourage extensive back and forth chatting about philosophical ideas.

If you have not yet requested a copy of my most recent book, *The Self-Revealed Knowledge That Liberates The Spirit,* obtain a copy, read it, and tell others about it. CSA inner circle members may request a complimentary copy. If you are not an inner circle member, the price is $7.95 plus $1.50 postage.

A Timely Reminder

This summer, before the seasonal changes that will begin in early autumn, review *An Easy Guide to Ayurveda* and write a schedule of the routines you may need to adopt to keep your mind-body constitution balanced.

Radiance Forum Participation

Use the enclosed form to participate in our discussions about kriya yoga philosophy, traditions, and practices. Scan back issues to see which themes have already been discussed.

A Final Note

Feel free to share information about *Radiance* magazine with other kriya initiates who may not know about it. CSA inner circle members who are initiates may request it on a complimentary basis. Other kriya initiates may subscribe for $6.00 a year, for four issues. Please do not loan copies of this publication to individuals who are not kriya initiates.

If you are a subscriber, renew your subscription annually. We do not send renewal notices.

If you decide to discontinue receiving *Radiance*, contact our office and let us know.

Having overcome identification with the body, senses, and mind, [the meditator's] consciousness becomes tranquil and awareness flows in the direction of absolute freedom.
– *Yoga Sutras 4:26* –

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Radiance

A Forum for Kriya Yoga Initiates

October – December 1997 Number 14

THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY

Without humility—absence of egotism—it is impossible to be a disciple (learner) on the kriya yoga path. Learning and spiritual growth are restricted when the twin obstacles of arrogance and mental perversity are allowed to prevail.

Light Through the Ages

THE SHIVA SAMHITA

An examination of a primary source of information on the philosophy and practices of yoga. (*A continuing series.*)

Dialogue

PHILOSOPHY, TRADITIONS & PRACTICES

Addendum

NEEDED NOW: Many Dedicated Servants of God

For the soul-liberating teachings of kriya yoga to be more widely promulgated so that sincere truth-seeking souls can be spiritually educated and initiated, the selfless cooperation of many dedicated servants of God is needed.

Some say the senses are superior. [However] superior to the senses is the mind; superior to the mind is the intellect; and superior to the intellect is the Self [one's true nature].

– Bhagavad Gita 4:42 –

Is there anyone
Who can tell me of the Lord's Name*?
Anyone who can bring to my view
That which is invisible?
All talk endlessly about God's Name;
No one knows its profound secret.
Outward talk and show
Are meaningless;
That one alone can give joy and peace
Who sees, experiences,
And then reveals the Name.
The true Name
Cannot be conveyed
Through spoken words.
Without realizing the Name,
Who can ever know its secret?

– Kabir
14th century saint, Varanasi, India

* Om, contemplated during meditation, is referred to as the name of God.

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The Necessity of Humility

The word origin of *humble* is Latin *humilus*, from *humus*, ground (from which the word *homo*, man or "earthling," is also derived). A humble person is modest, respectful, appropriately deferential, and unpretentious (not inclined to create a false or unjustified appearance). Some characteristics of a person who is not humble may be arrogance (an exaggerated or excessive sense of self-importance), pride, vanity, and personality-based assertiveness—symptoms of emotional immaturity and inability or unwillingness to use one's faculty of intellectual discernment.

Individuals lacking in humility are usually mentally perverse: inclined to be strongly self-willed; to misunderstand information or to adapt it to their egocentric needs; and to resist, by argument or by their silence, ideas or advice that might challenge them to change their views or behaviors. It is obvious that since humility is essential to learning and to spiritual growth, and that arrogance and mental perversity interfere with learning and spiritual growth, humility is a primary requirement for discipleship.

On one occasion, referring to certain disciples who had resided at Self-Realization headquarters for but a few months and offered their uninvited suggestions about how the organization should be administered, Paramahansa Yogananda said, "Some people come here and want to reform us [our philosophy and the way we do things] before they change themselves."

It is essential that a disciple be receptive to learning and be willing to apply what is learned. I never argued with my guru; when he spoke to me, I listened to his words with alert attention and endeavored to understand the meaning of what he said. Much of what he taught was implied (suggested indirectly) and conveyed by his presence and his behaviors. I discovered that when I was attuned to his consciousness and mind, I had access to his

inner realization and wisdom and could intuitively discern his thoughts and intentions, which he would sometimes acknowledge by a gesture, a glance, a verbal comment, or a brief, handwritten note or letter.

In occasional notes or letters to me, while Paramahansaji was always supportive and encouraging, his instructions were specific and often forthright. A few months after he accepted me as a disciple and sent me to live at the SRF Center in Phoenix, Arizona, in an endeavor to clarify my understanding of the kriya yoga philosophy and practices, I had a long conversation with Herbert Freed, the resident SRF minister. Herbert, who was two years older than me, mistakenly presumed that I had doubts and (I discovered later) informed our guru about the conversation. Shortly thereafter, I received a handwritten letter from Paramahansaji who was in seclusion in Twentynine Palms, California:

"Dear Roy: Doubts are like static in the mental radio that interfere with the flow of God's blessings." The second paragraph was blunt: "Either you be with us one hundred percent, or not be with us at all." In the last paragraph, he assured me of his continued support and good will. It was signed, "Unceasing blessings, P. Yogananda."

I immediately mailed a letter to Master, affirming my love for him and my commitment to the kriya yoga path.

A primary responsibility of a guru is to encourage disciples to purify the ego—the illusional sense of selfhood—so they can perceive themselves as spiritual beings abiding in God. When the disciple is fixated in ego awareness and protective of it, egotism tends to become pronounced. If egotism is further nurtured by self-centered mental attitudes and behaviors, one's faculty of discriminative intelligence is impaired and grievous (pain-causing) errors in judgment are habitually made. The most common intellectual error is that of presuming to know more than we know, which may incline us to be resistant to further learning

and to examining and perceiving the truth of a situation which is obvious to others who are humble and insightful.

The problem of egotism is not a recent one. In the pages of the Old Testament (*Proverbs 16:18*) are recorded words attributed to Solomon the son of David: "Pride goeth before [self] destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." And neither are yogis who have accomplished advanced states of samadhi (superconsciousness) always entirely secure in their realizations. Pride of attainment, or erring in believing themselves to be fully enlightened when they are not, sometimes results in arrested spiritual growth or a partial or complete return to their former confused states of awareness.

One of the reasons why yoga gurus counsel disciples to avoid preoccupation with *siddhis* (exceptional abilities) is that fascination with them distracts the devotee's attention from the purpose of spiritual practice (liberation of consciousness) and can result in further strengthening of the ego. One whose ego is purified can use siddhis when wisdom-directed to do so. However, the more Self-realized one is, the more likely it is that spontaneous unfoldments of grace will occur without the need of intentional use of siddhis. Exceptional abilities are most beneficially used when we are humble enough to know and to acknowledge that we are but agents of the workings of grace. We then realize that real power resides in our consciousness, which is an aspect of God's consciousness, and not in the ego-directed mind.

Occasionally, through the years, various individuals who had earlier asked to be accepted for discipleship training, have said to me, "Just explain the teachings and initiate me into kriya yoga practices; don't tell me how to live my life. Encourage me on the path; don't mention my personal weaknesses or faults, or expect me to change my opinions and behaviors."

My experience with Paramahansaji was that nothing in a disciple's mind or about their lifestyle escaped his observation. When aware of a disciple's ego-based attitudes and behaviors, he

would sometimes patiently wait, to allow the person time to learn and to grow to emotional maturity. At other times, when he intuitively knew that the disciple needed to be corrected, he would not hesitate to provide helpful advice. Humble disciples always appreciated his honest intervention and endeavored to improve themselves; egotistical disciples often withdrew from him, choosing to sever the disciple-guru relationship rather than allow psychological transformation to be effected.

In yoga practice, honest self-analysis and concentrated endeavor to remove psychological obstacles which restrict flows of soul awareness is referred to as *tapasaya*: the "burning out" of the conditions which inhibit spiritual growth. Such cleansing, while sometimes painful to the unpurified ego, provides freedom to the soul. Beneficial practices for this purpose are the nurturing and perfecting of the *yamas* (restraints) and *niyamas* (not-restraints) described in Patanjali's *yoga-sutras* (refer to my book *Life Surrendered in God*: the chapter titled The Practice of Kriya Yoga, starting with sutra 29).

The five restraints are avoidance of (1) thoughts or actions which are harmful; (2) untruthful thoughts, words, and actions; (3) stealing; (4) dissipation of vital forces; (5) inclinations to be greedy, to grasp at and cling to unreasonable personal opinions, psychological characteristics, material things, and nonuseful relationships.

The five "not-restraints" or intentional constructive *kriyas* (actions) are (1) regimens and practices to ensure physical and mental cleanliness or purity; (2) the cultivation of soul contentment in all circumstances; (3) practices to facilitate psychological transformation; (4) study and analysis of consciousness which provides knowledge of one's true nature and of God; (5) surrender (letting go) of self-consciousness (the illusory sense of independent existence) to allow awakening to God-realization.

A helpful practice is to daily read portions of the *yoga-sutras*, the Bhagavad Gita, and other texts (such as the *Shiva Samhita*,

see the following segment in this issue) in which basic philosophical principles and the lifestyle practices supportive of spiritual growth are described. Such reading not only provides useful information and can inspire and motivate us to positive action, it awakens and unfolds our soul qualities and results in beneficial changes in the brain and nervous system.

Whenever you are aware of your resistance to doing what you know to be best for you to do, do it.

- When inclined to speak inappropriately, be still.
- When inclined to allow your emotions to dominate your reason, take command of your thoughts.
- When inclined to waste your time and energy by indulging in nonuseful social relationships and activities, remind yourself that you have more important things to do with your time and energy. Make wise choices.
- When inclined to find fault with others, concentrate on improving your own habits of thinking and behavior.
- When inclined to indulge in moods, fantasy, or illusional thinking, be soul-centered and intellectually discerning.
- When inclined to be disorganized or lazy, remember that your primary purpose in this incarnation is to awaken to Self- and God-realization. Live with Self-determined intention.
- When inclined to avoid meditation practice, sit to meditate.

Perform even small duties with excellence.
All work is purifying when done with the right motive.
Perform work with one hundred percent concentration.
– Paramahansa Yogananda –

The Shiva Samhita

Chapter one, continued from issue #13 of *Radiance*.

The Spirit [of God]

49. This entire universe, whether animate or inanimate, came out [was emanated] from [supreme] Intelligence. Renouncing everything, take shelter in it.

We can easily renounce mental and emotional attachments to "everything" by choosing to acknowledge and relate to That from which all forms and forces of nature have come into manifestation.

50. As space pervades a jar inside and outside, similarly within and beyond this ever-changing universe there exists one Universal Spirit.

51. As space pervading the five false states matter does not mix with them, the Spirit of God does not mix with this mutable universe.

The five "false states of matter" are the impermanent material expressions of the five subtle element-influences (*tattwas*, "true essences") which cause them to express.

52. From [the realm of] *devas* to this material universe, all are pervaded by one Spirit. There is [but] one *Sat-chit-ananda* (existence-intelligence-bliss) which is all-pervading.

The realm of *devas* is the abode of "shining beings" or spiritually advanced souls. It, like all emanated realms, is impermanent. The words existence-consciousness-bliss are used in an attempt to describe the field of Absolute Pure Consciousness. Bliss

is the pure joy of being unrelated to emotional states. The transcendent Absolute is devoid of characteristics.

53. Being not illumined by another, it is self-luminous; and because of that self-luminosity, the nature of Spirit is light.

Light is an electromagnetic radiation within the realm of manifested aspects of consciousness. This verse relates light to Spirit, the expressive aspect of consciousness, rather than to the Absolute which is transcendent.

54. Spirit is not limited by time or space; it is all-pervading, infinite, and self-referring.

The expressive aspect of consciousness is self-referring because it alone exists. Aspects of it are variously manifested.

55. Spirit is unlike this world composed of five states of matter which are illusory and subject to destruction. The Spirit of God, being eternal, is indestructible.

56. Since there is no other substance, Spirit is one. Because everything other than it is illusory, it is the True Existence.

57. By [true] knowledge [of God] ignorance is eliminated; the removal of [this cause of] suffering restores the soul to happiness. By [true] knowledge [of God], immunity from suffering results; [a characteristic of] the Spirit of God is bliss.

All forms of suffering are due to lack of spiritual awareness which results in delusions, illusions, and actions which cause misfortune. Suffering completely ceases and is no longer even a future possibility when the soul's awareness is restored to realization of wholeness.

58. Since by [true] knowledge [of God] ignorance, which is the cause of the material universe, is eliminated, the Spirit of God is pure knowledge and eternal.

The word *ignorance* is used to designate the field of Primordial Nature. When we discern the cause of universal manifestation, our illusions are replaced by knowledge.

59. Since the universe originates in time, there is One which is the true Self which is changeless because beyond time. [The reality of] that One is unthinkable [incapable of being comprehended by the mind].

60. All external substances will perish in the course of time; the Spirit of God alone will continue to exist.

61. Neither ether, air, fire, water, earth, nor their combinations, nor the devas, are perfect; the Spirit of God alone is perfect.

According to the philosophical theory which numbers and describes the categories of cosmic manifestation (*Samkhya*), the physical elements are manifested because of the mixing and combining of the subtle element influences which are regulated by the three *gunas*, the constituent characteristics of expressive consciousness.

62. Having renounced all false desires and abandoned all false worldly bonds, the yogi certainly perceives and realizes the Spirit of God in the Self.

False desires and worldly bonds are those which keep soul awareness attached to egoism. They are referred to as being false because they cannot result in permanent happiness. The only true (of lasting value) desire is desire for Self-realization. The only true relationship is with God.

63. Having perceived the Spirit of God in the Self, the yogi, with attention removed from externals, enjoys the ineffable bliss of *samadhi*.

The Self of us is God. Established in Self-knowledge, one realizes constant *samadhi*, oneness.

64. *Maya* [Primordial Nature] is the mother of the universe. Not from any other source has the universe been manifested. When [identification with] it ceases, the universe no longer exists for the yogi.

Primordial Nature is the field of self-expressed aspects of Om: time, space, and cosmic particles. *Maya* is "that which measures" or defines and manifests the universe. Its two primary characteristics are (1) truth veiling; (2) form producing. The soul's identification with it clouds awareness and obscures knowledge. When, during meditation, attention is withdrawn from the field of nature, the meditator ceases to be aware of it and its influences no longer prevail.

65. One to whom this world is seen to be but a field of *Maya*-based pleasure, undesirable and meaningless, cannot find any happiness in possessions, material things, nor mere sensual enjoyments.

66. To [unenlightened] people, the world is viewed in three ways: as being friendly, unfriendly, or indifferent. Such views also apply to interactions and relationships, and to material things.

67. The one Spirit of God individualizes as [the souls of] people who play various roles. The scriptures describe the universe to be illusory. The yogi removes the illusion of the phenomenal universe as having independent existence by realizing that it is the result of superimposition and by refutation of erroneous beliefs.

A common explanation of why the universe appears to be substantial is that unenlightened people tend to see only its surface appearances without knowledge of its inner causes. The world, being a manifestation of cosmic forces, is not an illusion; misperception of the facts of its existence is the cause of the illusions we have about it. Illusions we have regarding the world can be banished by apprehending its subtle causes and by discarding erroneous beliefs (delusions).

68. When one is free from self-identification with distinctions and states of existence (such as social status and individuality), one can declare the true Self to be one, indivisible, pure intelligence-being.

Emanation and Evolution

69. By God's will [impulse to manifest] *avidya* [not-knowledge, another term for Primordial Nature], the mother of this illusory universe, was produced.

70. By the interaction between pure *Brahman* [Supreme Consciousness] and Primordial Nature came *Brahma* (God as the Oversoul], from which space emerged.

Brahman is the Sanskrit word for the Absolute. *Brahma* (from the verb-root *brih*, to expand) is the expressive aspect of God. The author of the *Shiva Samhita* declares the manifestation of the expressive aspect of God to be the result of interactions between Supreme Consciousness and the field of Primordial Nature. In like manner souls are individualized.

71. From *Akasha* (the ether or space element) the air element was emanated; from air came fire; from fire, water; and from water, earth. This is the order of subtle emanation.

72. From ether [space], air emerged; from air and ether combined, fire emerged; from the triple compound of ether, air, and fire, water emerged; and from the combination of ether, air, fire and water the gross matters were produced.

73. The quality [characteristic] of ether [space] is sound; of air, motion and touch; of fire, form; of water, taste; and of earth, smell. This cannot be disputed.

74. Ether has one quality; air has two; fire has three; water has four; and earth has five—respectively, sound, touch, form, taste, and smell. This has been declared by the wise.

75-76. Sound is perceived through the ears, touch through the skin, form through the eyes, taste through the tongue, and smell through the nose. These are the organs of [sense] perception.

77. This universe was emanated from Pure Consciousness. Whether or not its existence can be inferred, the One does exist.

78. Earth becomes subtle and dissolves in water; water is resolved in fire; fire merges with air; air is absorbed in ether; and ether is resolved in Primordial Nature, which merges into God.

Knowing the sequence of the elements returning to their source has value to the devotee who wants to consciously depart from the body at the appointed time. The immediate way to depart is to transfer attention from the senses and mind to awareness of pure consciousness. If this is not possible, one can meditate, withdrawing awareness through the chakras and their vibratory frequencies of earth, water, fire, air, and ether elements, starting at the base chakra and bringing the life force upward to the crown chakra.

79. There are two [primary] forces: the outward flowing creative force and the transforming force—which have great potential and power. The field of Primordial Nature has three attributes: *sattva* (equilibrium); *rajas* (energetic transformation); and *tamas* (inertia).

80. Influenced by the outward flowing force, Primordial Nature pervaded by the transforming force is self-manifested as the universe.

81. When Primordial Nature has an excess of tamas, it manifests as *Durga*, over which the aspect of Supreme Consciousness referred to as *Ishwara* presides.

When the element essences are influenced by the inertia and heaviness of *tamas*, Primordial Nature manifests aspects of cosmic creative energy. One aspect is here referred to as the goddess *Durga*, associated with the five sensory organs and the five organs of action. *Ishwara* is the name given to the aspect of God

that regulates cosmic processes. *Ishwara* is also referred to as the lord or ruler of creation.

82. When Primordial Nature has an excess of *sattva*, it manifests *Lakshmi*; over which the aspect of Supreme Consciousness referred to as *Vishnu* presides. When Primordial Nature has an excess of *rajas*, it manifests as *Saraswati*, over which the aspect of Supreme Consciousness referred to as *Brahma* presides.

83. Gods, like *Shiva*, *Vishnu*, and *Brahma* are aspects of the Spirit of God; all material objects are products of Primordial Nature.

Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, is the name given to another aspect of cosmic creative energy considered to be the consort, the feminine energy regulated by the *Vishnu* aspect of God that preserves the worlds. *Saraswati*, the goddess of wisdom, is the name given to yet another aspect of cosmic creative energy depicted as the consort of *Brahma*. The "gods" and "goddesses" are not beings; they are the aspects and energies of God that govern cosmic processes. Mantras which correspond to the energy frequencies of the different aspects may be chanted to invite their influences into one's life or into an environment.

84. The wise [seers] have thus explained the manifestation of the worlds; the tattvas [subtle elements] and other forces.

85. All things are seen as being finite [endowed with qualities]; names are applied to various distinctions, but there is no real difference.

86. Therefore, things have no independent existence; the One that manifests them alone exists. Though things are illusory, as reflections of the real they appear to be real.

87. Supreme Consciousness, blissful, entire, and all-pervading, alone exists. One who constantly realizes this reality is freed from death and the sorrow that results from being identified with the ever-changing field of Nature.

88. When, by the knowledge that everything that is seen is an illusory perception, and by intellectual refutation of other doctrines, for the seer the universe is resolved into the One and nothing else.

Devotees should never forget that all things external to the field of Pure Consciousness are ever-changing appearances on the screen of space-time. It is they who endow what they see with meaning. Anyone who is addicted to things or to sensations of any kind is endowing them with reality they do not have. A discerning devotee will not be challenged by the delusional opinions of others. Disregarding philosophical doctrines that are not based on realization of what is true, one will clearly perceive the fact that one reality alone exists.

89. From the physical bodies of the father and mother, and in accord with its karma, the soul is reincarnated. The wise consider this body to be the means of experiencing the effects of past actions.

90. This temple [physical body] which can experience both pain and pleasure, is for the sake of suffering the results of ignorance.

91. The physical body, the abode of God composed of five elements known as the microcosm [Greek *mikros kosmos*, small world], was produced for the purpose of experiencing pleasure or pain.

Masters of yoga teach that even experiences and relationships which provide pleasure can be the cause of pain when, in the near or distant future, the conditions which support those experiences and relationships change. It is permissible for a devotee to enjoy wholesome pleasure so long as there is no strong mental or emotional attachment to pleasure or to that which causes pleasure. For one's understanding to be complete, knowledge of both the microcosm and the macrocosm (Greek, *makros kosmos*, large world) should be acquired by cultivating cosmic consciousness. When the physically embodied devotee is firmly established in Self-realization, even with a residue of karma yet to be cleansed from the mind, the spiritually awake state of

jivanmukta (soul-freedom) is accomplished.

92. From the interactions of Spirit and matter, all creatures are born.

93. From the fivefold combination of all subtle elements in this universe, innumerable gross objects are produced. The intelligence that is confined in them because of karma is called the *jiva* [soul]. The universe is derived from the five elements; the soul experiences the results of prior actions.

94. In conformity with the karma of souls, their destinies are regulated by the principles of causation. Souls identify with material bodies to experience the effects of prior causes.

95. Bound to matter by their karma, souls assume various roles.

96. When the influences of karma have been exhausted, souls are merged in *Parabrahman* (Supreme Consciousness).

When the worlds are dissolved, during the interlude of nonmanifestation, unenlightened souls abide in an unconscious state in the field of Primordial Nature. When a new universe is emanated, they again become involved with the realms of mind and matter.

– to be continued

Kriya Yoga Philosophy, Traditions, and Practices

Your participation is invited. Use the form provided with each issue.

Where can I find information about astral and causal realms and what I might expect to experience when I depart the physical realm? What do superconscious states feel like?

For detailed information about astral and causal realms, read chapter 43, "The Resurrection of Sri Yukteswar," in Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Also read the chapter on "The Soul's Sojourn in Time and Space" in my book, *The Self-Revealed Knowledge That Liberates the Spirit*.

Some indications of superconsciousness are mental peace, emotional calmness, and awareness of being Self-sufficient. In the early stages of superconsciousness, subtle thoughts and emotional states may be present. When superconsciousness becomes more pronounced, thoughts and emotions are dormant during meditation practice. When superconsciousness prevails at other times, we are calm, alert, insightful, and able to discern the difference between ourselves as beings of pure consciousness and the thoughts and feelings that occur. Superconscious states are states of soul awareness which naturally prevail when mental and emotional states are calm and harmonious.

After practicing kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra, what is the next step to experiencing and maintaining the God-conscious state?

After practicing kriya pranayama, sit in the silence. After a while, practice jyoti mudra and again sit in the silence, listening to Om. From that stage onward, soul unfoldment will occur spontaneously. Meditate regularly and go deeper into the silence.

Patiently practice through the months and years and your spiritual growth will be satisfying.

Patience is the quality of being able to calmly endure unsatisfactory circumstances until they are improved by fortunate events that occur or by our own positive actions. Impatience reinforces discontent and can result in frustration, anger, and other symptoms of psychological unrest. When you are not satisfied with circumstances, engage in possibility-thinking: clearly envision the personal circumstances you consider to be most ideal. An adjustment of viewpoint may be all that is required, or it may be that necessary actions will have to be implemented. Whatever you are able to clearly discern as being possible for you to experience, can be actualized or realized. Avoid unhappiness and despair. Nurture Self-confidence. Have faith—which is the actual "substance" of that unto which you aspire. Remember that *kriya* means "action." Calmly and cheerfully engage in wisdom-directed constructive actions and you will be a kriya yogi.

When you cannot always include long meditation sessions (of at least an hour), daily practice the basic kriya pranayama and jyoti mudra routines and sit in the silence for a least twenty minutes. Doing this will keep your nervous system refreshed and your mind calm, and will confirm your commitment to the path. After meditation practice, when superconscious states persist during the waking hours, transformations of ordinary self-conscious states facilitate progressive unfoldments of cosmic conscious and God-conscious states.

One of the reasons why regular kriya pranayama practice is emphasized is that it is believed that the actions of the life forces that flow through the spine and brain refine the nervous system and cause changes in the brain. The theory is that each complete ascending and descending flow of life force has a transformative influence on the body equal to the constructive effects of living for one year under ideal conditions. What might require the influences of nature (sunlight, fresh air, nutritious food, and evo-

lutionary forces) several thousands of years to accomplish (if one is psychologically healthy) a kriya yogi can accomplish in a few years. This is one reason to practice regularly even if your devotional ardor is inconsistent. Two daily sessions of 14 kriya pranayamas for one year can accomplish 10,220 years of refinement of the physiology that nature's influences would effect; 100 daily kriya pranayamas for one year corresponds to 36,500 years of natural evolution; 100 daily kriya pranayamas for 28 years corresponds to over one million years of natural evolution. Some kriya yoga gurus say that 14 daily kriya pranayamas refresh the mind and nervous system and prevent the accumulation of stress, while extra pranayamas hasten the refinement process.

Any kriya yoga devotee should be able to sit for a few minutes each day to accomplish at least 28 pranayamas. Once the flow is experienced, it is easier to sit longer and do more. One of the results of regular practice of kriya pranayama is that, eventually, subtle flows of life force circulate in the spine and throughout the body all of the time. When doing kriya pranayamas during your meditation session, be fully attentive to your practice. At other times, when you are sitting quietly during the day, practice a few mild kriya pranayamas just to keep the current moving. You need not adopt a formal, upright meditation posture when you do this. When you awaken at night, lie on your back and encourage the current to flow in the spine.

When practicing kriya pranayama, observe your state of awareness. Notice that as your body becomes relaxed and your emotions become calm, thoughts and mental transformations (*vrittis*) are quieted and the impulses (*vasanas*) that contribute to mental restlessness subside. When your vital forces are concentrated in the spinal pathway, the flows of prana through the subtle prana pathways (*nadis*) of your astral body become harmonious. Kriya pranayama is then practiced deep and slow. When practice ceases, breathing is minimal and refined and awareness is withdrawn from the body and mind, enabling meditative

contemplation to proceed without interruption. For kriya yoga pranayama practitioners, refinement and enlivening of the nervous system is accomplished through the months and years; quieting of physiological functions, emotions, and mental transformations can be accomplished each time you sit to meditate. When the body is relaxed and mental activities are stilled—and the meditator remains alert and attentive—superconscious states become progressively pronounced.

When meditating, avoid passive, dull states of awareness which may attract your attention to subconscious and unconscious states. Sit upright, looking into the spiritual eye (or with your awareness centered there). After kriya pranayama practice, when listening to the sound frequency referred as Om, extend your awareness beyond the skull; listen to the sound of Om around you and slightly above your head.

My question is in regard to your statement made in the previous issue of *Radiance* about your being the only remaining Satguru ordained by Paramahansa Yogananda. What about some of the other disciples of Paramahansaji who are still actively teaching?

So far as I know, none of my brother or sister disciples who offer instruction and initiation into kriya yoga practices do so as satgurus. That is, they do not consider (or publicly acknowledge) themselves to be spiritual successors in the lineage of Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda. They consider themselves to be teachers representing this tradition. Ministers of Self-Realization Fellowship, for instance, are authorized by the board of directors of SRF to teach and initiate, subject to periodic review and renewal of permission. Persons whom they initiate are informed that they should consider Paramahansa Yogananda to be their guru. Since these new initiates are not able to have direct access to Paramahansaji, they do not have the benefit of personal guidance of a practical nature, just as Christians who think of Jesus as their guru have no possibil-

ity of having personal contact with him.

Of course, all kriya yoga teachers and gurus honor the lineage of the gurus of our tradition and consider themselves to be representatives of them. The matter being addressed here is that of the need for continuation of the lineage of kriya yoga gurus which will ensure that these teachings will remain vital, and opportunities for life-transforming initiation will be available to sincere devotees in the future. Even now, only a few direct disciples (disciples personally initiated by Paramahansaji and authorized by him to initiate others) remain. In a few years they will be gone. Within less than two decades (20 years), unless the lineage of gurus continues, teachers in this kriya yoga tradition, even though devoted and sincere, will be teaching secondhand information about the principles and practices rather than communicating their realization of God as agents through which transformative grace is transmitted. I am not influenced by the opinions of others, or interested in what they feel or consider to be true; I am only concerned with what is real or authentic.

Of the themes about which I have written in recent months, the two which have triggered the strongest emotional reactions in some readers are (1) the matter of the succession of kriya yoga gurus; (2) the inadvisability of being preoccupied with endeavors to be in telepathic communication with saints who are no longer physically embodied.

One reader wrote a brief letter in which she accused me of arrogance and requested to be removed from our mailing list.

Another reader sent a two page e-mail letter, unsigned, in which he shared his views and those of his "spiritual adviser," to whom he had given a copy of what I had written. The essence of the e-mail letter writer's opinion was that "all of the people through the centuries who have claimed contact, telepathic or otherwise, with saints who reside in astral or causal realms couldn't be wrong"—therefore, I am. He took issue with something I had written in the question and answer section of a recent issue of *Truth Journal* and quoted me:

> Sincere truth seekers need to be emotionally mature, intellectually discerning, and functionally competent if they are to accomplish real spiritual growth. Indulging in wishful thinking and dramatizing mood-impelled behaviors will not result in enlightenment.

The closing comment, attributed to his spiritual adviser, was: "What happened to the heart? What happened to love? What happened to the personal relationship with God? Isn't that what our Beloved Yogananda was all about?"

The real "heart" is the essence of our being, not our feelings. And while love is a purifying and attracting influence, and an intimate relationship with God is of value, Paramahansaji emphasized the importance of going beyond the devotee stage—to awaken to Self- and God-realization. No, devotion alone (and certainly not simpleminded, emotion-compelled thinking) was not what Paramahansaji "was all about."

While writing this portion of the text for *Radiance*, a letter has just arrived, forwarded from Jill Price, one of our CSA Center facilitators in Medford, Oregon. Because the letter was sent to the CSA of Medford Center, I presume the writer is not aware of our offices in Lakemont, Georgia. It is signed, but the signature is not easy to read. Here is what the person, who is obviously sincere, with good intentions, wrote:

> Dear Mr. Davis: While I know in my heart that there is room in the universe for all of us and that all will be forgiven in the end, you must know, deep inside your soul, that by giving kriya initiation you are doing a great disservice to our Master's work. Please do not use the name of our Master to further your own pursuits. If you were a true disciple of Paramahansaji's you would serve his work through loyalty to the Guru's Self-Realization Fellowship instead of blatantly serving your own ego. You are breaking sacred vows and misguiding others who look to you for guidance. I wish you well and pray for you always.

Every year, I receive several letters similar to this one from

people who happen to read one of our magazine advertisements or a brochure or poster announcing our seminars or retreats. If you have wondered if I am ever provided with opportunities to seriously think about why I do what I do, and be reminded of the necessity of humility, now you know.

When kundalini is awakened, does one sometimes feel the body to be vibrating—or is this due to the movements of the life forces?

Dynamic kundalini (dormant potential) awakening causes the life forces to flow directly to the crown chakra and internalizes the devotee's attention so that meditation occurs automatically. The sensations you mention may be due to the actions of the energies (*shakti)* of kundalini. If they interfere with concentration when meditating, relax the body so that the life forces can flow through subtle channels at deeper levels. Some meditators experience various sensations and mild movements of the body in the early stages of practice when symptoms of stress and emotional unrest are still present.

What is the relationship of kriya yoga to raja yoga?

Kriyas are "actions"; *yoga* is "the uniting of the soul's awareness with God," the culmination of right actions. *Raja* (royal) *yoga* is the yogic path which emphasizes meditation practice. The kriya yoga path includes the most effective practices of raja yoga and of all systems of yoga. Patanjali's yoga-sutras describe kriya yoga practices and the "eight-limbed" path of raja yoga. The eight aspects of raja yoga are (1) practice of the restraints (yamas) and (2) the intentional disciplines (niyamas); (3) meditation posture, which is comfortable and pleasant; (4) regulation and harmonizing of flows of prana to elicit relaxation and calm the actions of the mind; (5) internalization of attention; (6) concentration on the meditation object or ideal; (7) undistracted concentration or meditation; (8) samadhi. Samadhi is of two kinds:

(1) identification of awareness with that which was meditated upon; (2) transcendent superconsciousness without the support of an object. The first category of samadhi is confined, conscious absorption of attention and awareness; the second is unconfined, conscious liberation of awareness.

The word *samadhi* is from Sanskrit *sam-a-dha*, "to hold together completely," and is most often used in regard to superconscious states. Among yogis, one may sometimes hear a jesting remark about devotees who seem to be more attracted to *nidra* (sleep) samadhi than to superconscious samadhi.

Earlier I could not sit comfortably in the lotus posture. After kriya pranayama practice I find that I can now easily do it. When I reverse the tongue back to the throat, I cannot put it deep inside. How can I improve this? (*Note*: This inquiry is from one of our kriya initiates in India.)

Placing the tongue against the roof of the mouth or curled upward and back toward the throat is sometimes helpful in keeping the throat open when doing kriya pranayamas. If doing this distracts attention from being aware of the movements of the current in the spinal pathway, it need not be done. Positioning the tongue like this is referred to as *kechari* (being free in space) mudra. With or without the tongue in this position, to be free in space means that one's awareness, no longer confined to the body or thought processes, is expanded and clear.

When sitting in the silence, I experience difficulty in my endeavors to avoid involvement with my thoughts and emotional states. Is there a positive way to control thought processes, imagination, and feelings prior to experiencing the silence?

Although meditation is practiced to remove attention from thoughts and emotional states, visualization can often be used as a preliminary procedure. In one of Paramahansaji's correspondence lessons, published in 1925, he recommended the following

meditative exercise:

> Close your eyes. Relax. Concentrate on the ball [field] of darkness that surrounds you. Feel it. Imagine the ball [field] of darkness and vibration to become as big as the Earth—then big enough to contain all of the stars and everything in space. Fill that infinite ball [field] of vibration with the consciousness of bliss, unceasing watchfulness (with attention concentrated everywhere), the consciousness of immortality, knowledge, peace, all-pervading energy, and life force. Remain identified with this highest, most interesting substance for as long as you can. Then God will be real to you and you will have God's guidance in everything [that you do].

Use your imagination until you are aware of being one with the field of Infinite Consciousness, then remain absorbed in that state for the duration of the meditation session.

I am certain that I know my major purpose in life, yet in spite of my best efforts I do not seem to be able to a accomplish it. What can you suggest that I do that might be helpful?

Perform all actions in relationship with God. If you are certain that you know your major purpose in life, fulfill it. If you need more knowledge to enable you to be more effective, acquire it. If you need to improve your skills, improve them. Continue doing your best. Be dedicated to excellence. Expect the universe to provide the opportunities, resources, and the assistance of others that you need—and it will. If evolution is inclined to do something worthwhile through you, it will if you learn to cooperate with it. Don't discuss your major purpose in life with anyone except people who are to play a role in your endeavors.

Even though my desire to be God-realized is so compelling that nothing else seems important to me, I do not seem to be progressing in that direction. What can I do to realize God?

Start by improving your understanding of the reality of God. God is the only Being in existence. God is individualized as you (and as all souls). Know that God is within you, as you, as well as around you. Because omnipresent, God's all-pervading presence includes your awareness of being. Besides attending to the matter of your own God-realization, remember that millions of other souls also desire to be God-realized and that your spiritual enlightenment will benefit them by somewhat illuminating the entire field of collective human consciousness. There are practical things you can do to provide spiritual education for others on the path. If you do not yet feel qualified to facilitate a meditation group, you can at least distribute literature and contribute funds for CSA ministry activities. If you are affiliated with another kriya yoga organization, such as Self-Realization Fellowship or Ananda Church of Self-Realization, participate accordingly.

While you are in this realm you have duties to perform. Perform them attentively and skillfully. Renounce the illusory idea that there must be a division between material and spiritual work. Actions which are wisely chosen and selflessly performed for wholesome, constructive purposes in this world do not restrict spiritual growth.

I have been an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous for many years. Now that I know I am a spiritual being and am committed to God-realization and liberation of consciousness, I do not feel comfortable affirming that I am a recovering alcoholic when I attend AA meetings. Should I continue to go to those meetings?

I am reminded of a comment attributed to William Penn (Pennsylvania, U.S., 18th century), a prominent member of the religious group known as the Society of Friends who believe that, because God is equally present in all people, it is wrong to cause harm to anyone. Mr. Penn was once asked by a member of the community who, because of fear for his safety and the safety of his family, carried a rifle, "How long must I continue to carry

this weapon?" To which he replied, "You will have to carry it until you can no longer do so."

When you are established in spiritual awareness, you will no longer affirm that you are addicted to any substance or be fearful that you will ever again be addicted. For individuals who are addicted to alcohol—or to drugs, food, relationships, or compulsive behaviors of any kind—the cause is never external. It is the addictive personality that needs to be healed. All spiritually unaware people, even if considered by normal standards to be healthy-minded and functional, are addicted to the illusory notion that they are self-conscious creatures subject to circumstances common to the human condition.

When I meditate I do not experience calmness. I am confused about the practice of techniques and routines. What is the difference in the effects of hatha yoga practice and of the energization exercises taught by Paramahansaji? Which should I do?

To meditate effectively, start with intention. Sit for a few moments. Mentally pray or acknowledge your existence in God. Practice kriya pranayama, rest in the silence, practice jyoti mudra, rest in the silence for a long time listening to Om. Techniques are preliminary practices used to relax the body, calm the mind, and internalize attention.

Paramahansaji originated the energization exercise routine before 1920. He taught them through the years because he felt they were useful and were more easily adapted by people in the West. They consist of tensing the muscles of the body while concentrating at the spiritual eye and visualizing life force flowing to the muscles from the medulla oblongata at the base of the brain, then relaxing to withdraw the life force. Many people say they enjoy doing them. Others prefer hatha yoga practice. Some do the energization routine in the morning or evening and do a hatha yoga routine at another time.

Is it true that a guru can take on the karma of a disciple?

Some gurus can attune their awareness so completely with the awareness and mind of a disciple that they transfer some of the disciple's mental impressions and subtle causes of physical problems to their own astral and physical body. Other gurus do not do this; instead they "see the nothingness" of the karmic conditions to weaken and eliminate them. When we are attuned to the stream of God's grace flowing through the line of gurus, our karmic condition is improved and our spiritual awakening occurs more quickly.

Is it better to chant the seed (bija) mantras at the chakras or to chant Om while concentrating at the chakras?

Chanting the seed mantras at the chakras usually results in an awareness and feeling of aliveness in the chakras. They are referred to as seed mantras because they correspond to the energy frequencies of the chakras. You can experiment with chanting seed mantras and compare your experience to that which results when chanting Om at the chakras. The seed mantras for the chakras can be found in the first section of *Life Surrendered in God*. When chanting them, or Om, look into the spiritual eye, with your awareness in the spinal pathway and brain. After ascending and descending through the chakras a few times, conclude at the crown chakra while continuing to look into the spiritual eye, listening to Om.

Clear your mind of dogmatic theological debris;
let in the fresh, healing waters of direct perception.
– Lahiri Mahasaya –

Addendum

NEEDED NOW:
Many Dedicated Servants of God

Two primary concerns are in the forefront of my mind as I begin this article: (1) the need for us to actively reach out to people who are sincerely interested in spiritual growth and who will be responsive to what we have to offer; (2) the need for us to have more teacher-representatives and kriya yoga initiators in many regions of the world. The work to be done in the months and years yet to unfold will require the volunteer participation of many dedicated servants of God.

Outreach: the Quantity Work

Hundreds of thousands of people who have for many years been actively endeavoring to grow spiritually do not yet know of our existence; thousands who are just beginning their quest need to know about us; and every few years a new generation emerges on the scene. We want to reach individuals who are sincerely interested in spiritual growth, not casual seekers or people who are incapable of learning and practicing what we have to offer. Every person who is curious about the reality of God and the meaning of life should be provided an opportunity to examine the facts. What they choose to do with what they learn is up to them. You can assist in ministry outreach in accord with your capacity and means:

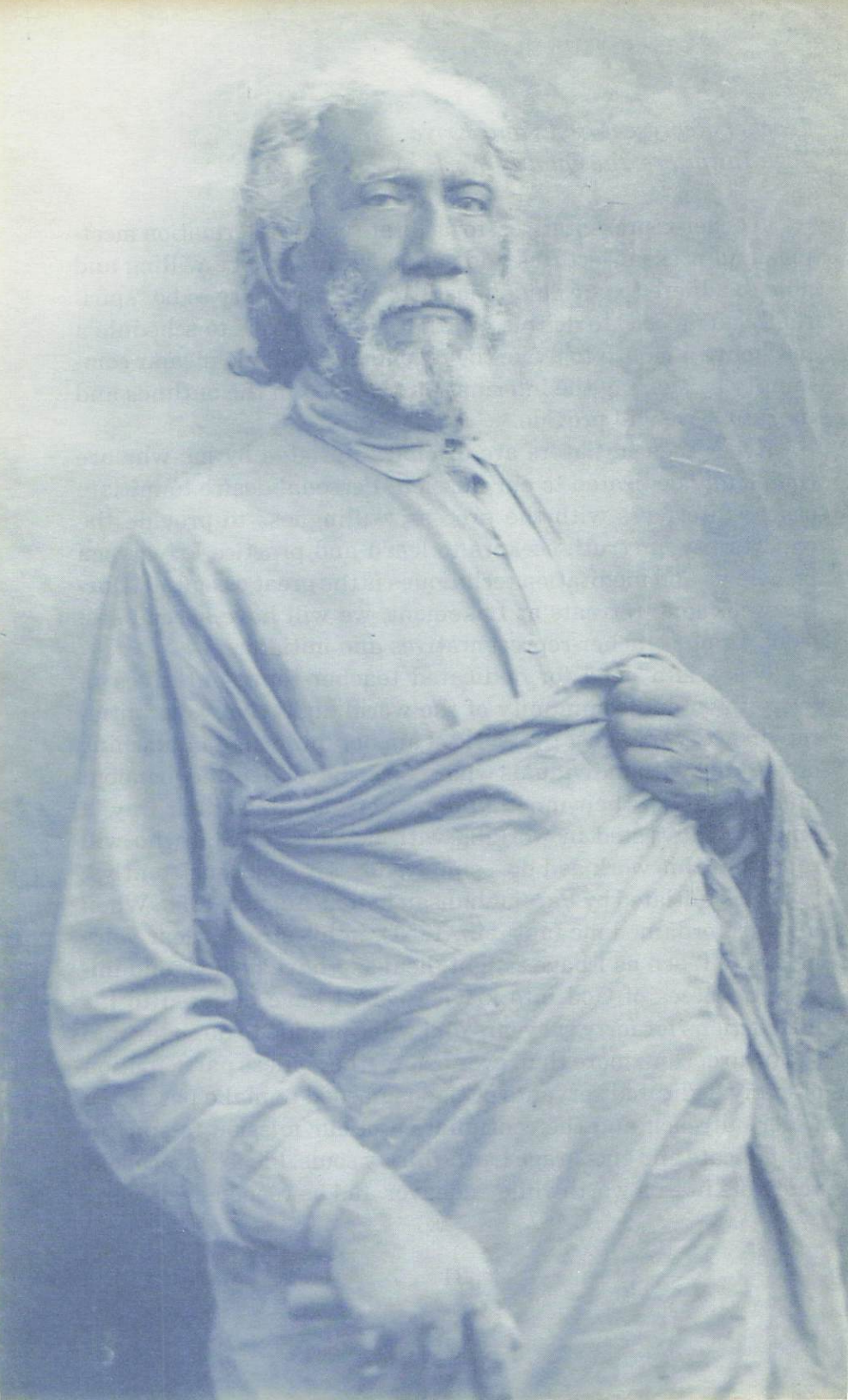
- Live a balanced, God-centered life, for your own highest good and to be a positive example for others.
- Decide how much time, energy, and money to use for personal needs and interests and how much time, energy, and money to use in the service of others.

- Distribute our free literature to interested individuals and place it in your community where it will be seen and picked up. Metaphysical book stores often have a section assigned where their customers can obtain free literature. Request as much as you can immediately distribute. There is no need to discuss philosophy or theology with anyone; just put the literature where it can be available.
- Lead a meditation group. Read the supplement in issue number 11 of Radiance for guidelines about how to do this.
- If you can represent our books to bookstores, let us know. We will send you a guideline sheet with information about how to do this. No selling is involved. Merely show the books and pass along the printed information we will provide.
- Financially support our outreach mission. Donations designated for this purpose are used to print free literature and to advertise our books in carefully selected publications—the ones read by people who might be interested. For instance, we now have advertisements in *Yoga Journal*, *Yoga International*, *New Thought*, and *Personal Transformation* magazines which are distributed in North America. We are also advertising in *Life Positive* magazine in India. Advertising is being scheduled for Great Britain, South America, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia. We should also test advertising in secular magazines which are perused by intelligent, curious readers. Our books are also advertised in the catalogs of wholesale book distributors (which supply retail bookstores) and brochures are being sent to more than 9,000 bookstores. Although magazine advertising is expensive, it reaches many readers at a low cost per reader. Example: a one-half page ad (cost $1200) in *Yoga Journal* with a circulation of 100,000-plus copies enables us to communicate with its readers for less than 2 cents per reader.
- Financially support our overall ministry activities with regular donations to CSA.

Teacher-Representatives and Kriya Yoga Initiators: the Quality Work

Teacher-representatives, to facilitate public information meetings and present lectures and seminars, need to be willing and able to adhere to our guidelines. It is not necessary to be "spiritually advanced" to do this. All that is required is to schedule a few hours a month to make the teachings available in your community by sharing the information provided in the outlines and literature we will provide.

Kriya Yoga initiators are disciples initiated by me who are completely dedicated to our mission. Personal desire to initiate others interferes with the process; willingness to provide the opportunity for truth seekers to learn and practice kriya yoga principles and meditation techniques is the great essential. During week long retreats at Lakemont, we will have special sessions for our teacher-representatives and initiators.

There is a need for dedicated teacher-representatives in every town and community of the world and kriya yoga initiators in every region of the world. I am not interested in teaching or working with individuals who want to have their independent ministry, follow their inner guidance, or "do things their way." I am only interested in working with devotees of God who will represent this work as I do—simply, directly, and consistently.

I was initiated by Paramahansaji in mid-August, 1950. When my guru ordained me (autumn, 1951), in his strong, clear voice he said, "Teach as I have taught, heal as I have healed, and initiate devotees of God into kriya yoga." I have adhered to his instructions for forty six years and will continue to do so far into the future. Now, more than ever before, the selfless participation of many dedicated servants of God is needed to make possible a wider outreach and the continuation of our mission to spiritually educate and encourage truth-thirsty souls. Please pray about your role in this worthwhile endeavor and be responsive.